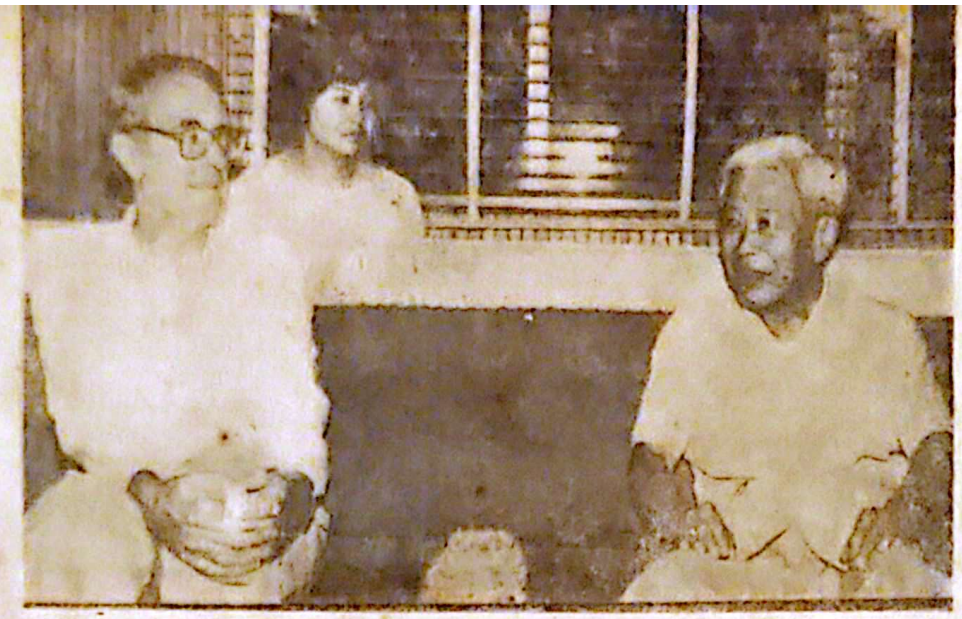
Vietnam Courier

A MONTHLY REVIEW No: 11-1987

- Third Plenum of the Sixth CPV Central Committee: Fundamental Economic Reforms
- Vietnam's Foreign Policy in the New Circumstances
- Soviet Literature in Vietnam
- The Great Writer Nguyen Tuan Is no More

RENOVATION OF ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES



● *Pham Hung, Chairman of the SRV Council of Ministers, receiving Prof. Mikel Ray representative of the World Health Organization in Ho Chi Minh City. (30 July 1987)*

Photo: THU HOAI

● *Pham Hung, Chairman of the SRV Council of Ministers, receiving Jean Pierre Hocke, representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi. (9 September 1987)*

Photo: MINH DAO

● *CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh, receiving Cheddi Jagan, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party of Guiana. (10 September 1987)*

Photo: XUAN LAM

Young Girl, white stone carving by VUONG HOC BAO.

Hanoi Sculpture Exhibition — 1987

A sculpture exhibition was recently opened in Hanoi by the Vietnam Association of Plastic Arts and the College of Fine Arts. On show were 109 sculptures and many photos of built monuments. These are the works of 28 authors from the Vietnam College of Fine Arts. Two genres — monuments and statuettes — have been successfully practised by young sculptors. Good results have been obtained in the quest for new materials: laterite ceramics, aluminium, brass, cast-iron, paste made of lime and rice-paper. Traditional materials such as wood, stone and plaster have been made the most of. Each author specializes in certain materials and themes: Tran Tia in monuments and wood carvings; Tran Thi Mong in brass and aluminium, Can Thu Cong in terra-cotta statues, Luu Thanh Danh in monuments.

In the making of wooden statuettes, Pham Van Dinh uses the traditional techniques for sculpture in the round. His works bear a clear national and folk stamp: *Old Man of the Central Highlands, The Jester* (water puppet)...

The exhibition displays the specific language of sculpture. The exhibits are rich in both content and form and a wide range of materials is used. Some works are so lively that they seem to engage in a "dialogue" with the viewer. No doubt they are meant to carry a message from the author. Indeed, even "wood and stone can be made to convey a smile".

VU QUOC HUNG

THE 1987 – 1988 SCHOOL YEAR

The 1987-1988 school year started on 5 September last with enrolments of nearly 15 million pupils in kindergartens and general education schools.

The 1986-1987 school year was a very difficult one, but it also was marked with some encouraging achievements gained by Vietnamese pupils at international contests: all the 15 Vietnamese contestants at the Sixth International Russian Olympiad held in Moscow won prizes: 12 gold, one silver and two bronze medals; 6 others were awarded one second and five third prizes at the 28th International Mathematics Olympiad held in Cuba; and 4 were awarded one third and three consolation prizes at the 18th International Physics Olympiad held in the GDR.

For the time being, the country is still facing many difficulties, the educational branch has to renovate its way of thinking and doing things in order to step by step raise the comprehensive quality of education. The educational work must not only be that of the educational branch, but also that of the whole society. With the motto: "Parallel efforts by the State and the people", a lot of schools and classrooms have been built or repaired. Many provinces and cities have invested large amounts of money for the building of the branch's material bases: Ha Son Binh supplied 90 million *dong*; Hanoi, 50 million *dong*, etc. Tens of thousands of tonnes of writing paper and other teaching instruments have been supplied to schools through the trade services. 33 million copies of text-books were published by the Educational Publishing House for the current school year. Especially, 14,180,000 text-books of the seventh reformed form have been enough to provide each pupil with a set of 11 text-books.

The branch will promulgate certain regulations aiming at putting the educational work in good order, simultaneously carrying out "democratization" movement in schools, thus creating conditions for "the teachers to know, discuss, work and supervise" all tasks relating to teaching and learning.

Combining study with practice and promoting the educational reform, technical vocational training centres and experimental centres will coordinate with the Vietnam Audio-Visual Centre to educate pupils through television. Two new subjects of study: the law and family planning will be gradually introduced into the school programme. Informatics is being studied for inclusion in the programme of certain pilot schools.

VAN HOA

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The preparatory work for this issue was completed on 15 September 1987.

Front Cover: *Frangipani, gouache by Trieu Khac Tien, 11, displayed at an exhibition of his paintings at the Hanoi Young Pioneers' Palace. (July 1987)*

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VIETNAM COOPERATES WITH IMO TO COMBAT MARINE POLLUTION

With the consent of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) with financial assistance from the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), organized in Haiphong and Vung Tau (Vietnam) a seminar on marine pollution lasting from 10 to 17 August 1987. Attending the conference were Minister Luu Van Loi representing the SRV Council of Ministers, Nguyen Dinh Doan, Vice-Minister of Communications and Transport, Dinh Van Khai, Director of Vietnam Register of Shipping, and leading cadres of other departments.

Three IMO experts gave lectures on legal problems, organization and execution of programmes for the prevention of accidents in the country, control and prevention, civil responsibility for pollution, measures to be taken in the case of accidents. About 80 experts of 44 services took part in the seminar.

All the participants recognized that marine pollution is an urgent problem of the time. Vietnam's 3,260 kilometres of sea-coasts and its exclusive economic zone of over one million square kilometres are constantly threatened by pollution. Their protection is of paramount importance for present and future generations.

The seminar set great store by the initial contributions of Vietnam Register of Shipping in this respect, viz publishing reports and a bulletin, translating and popularizing international conventions on combating marine pollution caused by shipping. At present, Vietnam Register of Shipping is cooperating with Haiphong, Quang Ninh and Vung Tau in drafting local regulations on the prevention of pollution. Apart from sending ten persons to London to study control of marine pollution caused by ships, it has run crash courses on international conventions and national rules for the prevention of marine pollution.

Following discussions and screenings of video films on pollution cases and how to deal with them, the participants were shown by the IMO experts special equipment against marine pollution now in use in the world. They unanimously recommended to our Government a number of legal and technical measures: setting up a national organization having jurisdiction over the whole country to give guidance to environmental protection, drafting a law on the protection of the natural and ecological environment, promulgating regulations on tourist zones, ports, oil exploitation sites, widening international cooperation, signing with neighbouring countries contracts for cooperation in case of emergency, setting up an association for the protection of nature and against pollution of the environment, granting national prizes to regions and individuals credited with outstanding achievements in the protection of the environment.

PHAM HOAN

PANORAMA • PANORAMA

ASIAN-PACIFIC TRADE UNION SEMINAR ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG WORKERS

At present, problems concerning education, professional training and employment for young workers are burning problems in the world in general and in the Asian-Pacific region in particular. In some countries in the region young people suffer serious unemployment caused by the policy of exploitation of transnational corporations and capitalist companies. The right of young workers to work, to study, to get professional training, to be involved in the elaboration of socio-economic policies and to take part in the management of the economy and society, has not been ensured. They are discriminated against, especially with regard to employment, wages and promotion. They receive only inadequate general and professional education and, therefore, cannot meet the requirements of scientific and technological development. This has led to many dismissals of young people from work. Besides, one cannot fail to note that while the number of unemployed keeps increasing, more and more children between 10 and 14 years of age have had to work as cheap labour.

Organized on the initiative of the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions and co-sponsored by the World Federation of Trade Unions and UNESCO, an "Asian-Pacific Seminar on Education, Training, Employment, Anti-Illiteracy and Improvement of Cultural Standards for Young Workers" was held in Hanoi on 16 and 17 July 1987.

Participating in the seminar were representatives of the World Federation of Trade Unions, UNESCO and of 15 trade union organizations from: Australia, India, Japan, Kampuchea, Laos, the Philippines, the Soviet Union, Thailand and Vietnam.

The participants had a broad exchange of views on burning problems related to young workers. They noted that the noble goals and motto of the International Youth Year (1985) declared by the United Nations — "Participation, Development, Peace" — remained as topical as ever.

The participants unanimously held that problems concerning education, employment, rest and recreation for young workers, as well as their participation in the elaboration of socio-economic policies, could only be solved in the conditions of peace and democracy. The struggle for the rights and interests of young workers is, therefore, closely linked with the struggle for national development along the road of democracy and progress, with the struggle for the establishment of a new, equitable and mutually beneficial international economic order, against exploitation by the capitalists and transnational corporations, and with the struggle for peace and international security.

The participants called upon the trade unions and governments of the countries in the region to give still greater attention to young workers, to take all necessary measures, including the adoption of laws, to solve urgent problems related to young workers.

The participants expressed their support for the peace initiatives of many countries in the region aimed at turning Asia and the Pacific into a region of peace, friendship and cooperation, free of nuclear weapons, and channelling part of the huge resources now being spent on the arms race towards helping poor countries in their socio-economic development, including the creation of more job opportunities, the improvement of living conditions and the upgrading of educational and professional standards for the youth.

The participants also appealed to the United Nations and relevant UN organizations, such as ILO, UNESCO, ESCAP,... to pay greater attention and make more active contributions to the education and training of young workers and the defence of their rights and interests.

NGUYEN HONG SON

THE CULTURE PUBLISHING HOUSE IS 30 YEARS OLD

Established on 24 July 1957, the *Van Hoa* (Culture) Publishing House has just observed its 30th birthday. Its publications are about national culture and arts, literary personalities and their works, and classical culture of Vietnam and other countries. It also prints picture books and books dealing with photography, painting and music.

During its thirty years of activity, the Culture Publishing House has put out thousands of books and tens of thousands of other materials. In the last five years alone it has produced 209 books, 716 other cultural materials, over one thousand folksongs and pieces of folk music, pictures, picture calendars and works of art. Many of its publications have been praised for their high quality. Many have been awarded gold, silver and bronze medals and certificates of merit at international book exhibitions in the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria... *Van Hoa* has been decorated by our Government with a second class Labour Order in 1982 and a first class in 1987. In the context of the present socio-economic renovation, the Culture

(Continued on page 12)

THIRD PLENUM OF THE SIXTH CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM

The Third Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam was held from August 20 to August 28, 1987. General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh delivered an important speech. Excerpts from his speech are published in this issue.

The plenum approved the Report of the Political Bureau reviewing the implementation of the Resolution of the Second Plenum of the Party Central Committee (held in early April this year) and outlining urgent guidelines and measures aimed at continuing its implementation. The Plenum affirmed that the Resolution of the Second Plenum is correct and that over the past four months or so changes for the better have been noted in the national economy. However, the situation in the distribution and circulation of goods continues to evolve unfavourably. The Plenum analysed the objective and subjective causes which have led to the present socio-economic situation and expressed the Party Central Committee's determination to lead the entire people in their effort to tide over the difficulties, emulate one another in production, practise thrift, combat negative phenomena, and observe strict discipline in order to develop our economy.

The Plenum discussed the situation in detail and adopted a resolution on "Shifting the operations of State-owned economic units to the socialist mode of enterprise and renovating the State management of the economy". The Communist Party of Vietnam and the SRV State are determined to abolish the mechanism of bureaucratic centralism based on government subsidies, and establish a new mechanism of economic management.

The aim of this renovation is to create a strong motive force, release latent productive capacities, promote scientific and technological advance, develop the commodity economy along the socialist line and attain ever higher productivity, product quality, and efficiency.

The Third Plenum marks a new step forward in the leadership and management of the economy by the Party and State, and lays the foundation for a new mechanism of economic management congruent with the spirit of the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress held in late 1986.

The Plenum also adopted the "Working Procedures of the Central Committee" aimed at ensuring the correct application of the principle of democratic centralism in Party life and enhancing the revolutionary and scientific character of Party leadership with a view to fulfilling the new tasks. ●

RENOVATION OF THE

Editor's Note : At the 3rd Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, held from 20 to 28 August 1987, General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh made an important speech. Following are main excerpts (Subtitles are ours) :

I. The Situation and the New Approach

...

A successful implementation of the Resolution of the Sixth Party Congress will be primarily decided by the extent and the speed of the renovation of the mechanism of economic management. This is why the Congress laid down this task : "To build up a comprehensive new system of economic management centred on planning ; to carry out socialist economic accounting on the principle of democratic centralism ; to bring into full play the new economic management mechanism so as to make better use of production capacities ; to restore discipline and order in economic management. »

To renovate the mechanism of economic management is at present an urgent requirement, the most important component of our Party's economic leadership. In this respect, our Party is deploying efforts in four closely connected major areas :

— The three major economic programmes ;

— Socialist transformation ;

— Renovation of the mechanism of economic management ; and

— Renovation of organization and cadre work.

The renovation of the mechanism of economic management must be linked to the above tasks if it is to achieve good results.

At present, what we lack most badly is not only the material and technical infrastructure of socialism and material resources to meet the needs of production and the people's life, but also an appropriate mechanism of economic management for running the whole national economy as well as each production and trading establishment with maximum efficiency. The building of a new mechanism of economic management is a vital condition for a rational and efficacious use of the existing material and technical bases, for positively contributing to the creation of more material resources for the national economy, and for the implementation of the three major economic programmes.

MECHANISM OF ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

...

Over the past several months, the Political Bureau has repeatedly discussed the problem and has instructed policy-making organs to prepare a plan for renovating the mechanism of economic management.

In this renovation we have to tackle two basic issues: renovation at the grassroots level, and renovation at the State level. Practice as well as theory have shown that these are two organically linked problems which must both be solved.

The grassroots economic unit is the cell of the national economy — a place where material wealth for society is produced. It provides for the living of the workers and accumulates wealth for itself and for the State. That is why a key point is to renovate the mechanism of management at the grassroots by giving it autonomy, thereby linking rights to responsibilities and interests to obligations, and giving a strong boost to productive and trading activities.

...

At this plenum of the Central Committee we can only discuss the State-owned economic units at the grassroots and take a closer look at the State-owned industry. This is a realistic approach. For many years now, a number of State-owned grassroots economic units have developed new methods of enterprise marked by dynamism and effectiveness. On this basis we may seek to perfect, complement and upgrade the new mechanism of management. We are also assisted by (draft) Resolution 306 of the Politburo, which has made a fairly deep analysis of this question. For over one year now we have been experimenting with its application and have seen its strengths and weaknesses. Thus we may further perfect the new mechanism.

Some comrades have argued that we should not confine our discussions to the State sector since at present it accounts for only a small part of our five-sector economy. That's true but only in appearance. In fact, although the State-owned industry and construction companies employ only more than one million persons (out of a total of 30 million working people throughout the country) and account for only 35% of the gross national product and 24% of the national income (1985 figures), they are the most important forces, which control the economic lifelines of the country, to say nothing of the State-owned units in home trade, foreign trade, transport, services, etc. Our economic difficulties at present chiefly stem from the insufficient strength of the State-owned units. If we can strengthen them through the renovation of the mechanism of management this will have a salutary effect on the whole economy and these units may play a leading role in performing integration and cooperation among different economic sectors and creating favourable conditions for the realisation of the three major economic programmes. So, what we are aiming at is not only a quantitative, but even more importantly, a qualitative change.

...

In nature as well as in society, in practice as well as in theory, it has been amply demonstrated that the change from one state to another, i.e. a qualitative change, requires the necessary transi-

tional steps. We cannot effect a leap forward before we have prepared the necessary material conditions. The success of a task to be performed is bound up with the means needed to carry it out. In many respects, we still lack the premises and conditions for the establishment of a system of economic management that is completely new qualitatively, that is complete and whose components are well-fitted together.

This is because :

— The economy of our country suffers from serious imbalances with a big gap between supply and demand. We don't have the normal conditions for reproduction, even simple reproduction. Social production has not been reorganised and re-arranged. Chaos still reigns in the distribution and circulation of goods, inflation remains high and there is no stable yardstick to measure the effectiveness of production and trading.

— Our programme for building socialism and our socio-economic strategy are yet to be defined. The country's economic structure has only been outlined.

We cannot « put the cart before the horse » by working out and implementing an entirely new and comprehensive strategy for economic management before the above-mentioned points are resolved.

— The mechanism of bureaucratic management based on government subsidies, which has prevailed for many years and still weighs heavily on the economy, cannot be abolished overnight.

Personnel and apparatus still lack both practical experience and theoretical knowledge and so are not yet ready to undertake a complete renewal.

In those conditions, what we need most at this moment is a management strategy compatible with the present socio-economic situation. Ours is still a very unstable economy with the old economic forms still holding on while the new ones are still in the making. In other words, it is a transitional economy, a transitional mechanism of management in which new and old elements intertwine. This is evident not only in the economy as a whole but also in each process, each economic organisation and even in each man involved in economic work.

II. A Mechanism of Economic Management Compatible with the Present Economic Conditions

The plan provides that beginning in 1988 some enterprises will change over completely to the socialist mode of enterprise, first of all, those engaged in cooperation with the Soviet Union, and processing and consumer-goods factories having relatively stable sources of material supplies and marketing outlets. By 1989 we hope to be able to expand this system and by 1990 to switch most State-owned economic units and the State apparatus over to the new system of management.

...

At present, we cannot yet subject the whole of the economy to full socialist business accounting. Even though some grassroots economic units may be able to include all production expenditures in costs without pushing up prices beyond the capacity of the economy and the purchasing power of the consumers, we cannot say that all grassroots economic units are in a position to do this. We need more time to rearrange production, improve management and techniques, and reduce intermediary links and indirect labour. This is a bitter struggle for renovation and for the abandonment of the long-established habit of relying on State subsidies, of looking upon the Government as the « wet nurse » who would be milked in case of losses, of having the consumers bear all the consequences of the producers' inefficient management.

Neither can we abolish right away a number of obligatory production targets (though their number has been greatly reduced) by relying only on orders given by the State and other customers, by inviting tenders, by fixing economic and technical norms and using various economic levers. We do not think that those economic forms depart in any way from the socialist principles of economic management, but we are not yet able to use them because these new methods of economic management are bound up with certain premises and conditions which are still to be created. That is why these forms of economic management can only be applied on an experimental basis where conditions permit.

Some have proposed the immediate "commercialization" of materials and equipment supplied to all economic sectors. But in the present conditions when there is a serious shortage of materials and equipment and when even State-run enterprises receive only about 50% of their needs, supply must be made to them according to the order of priorities of the State plan. At present, the only improvement we can make in this domain is to stop supplying materials to enterprises at too low prices, leading to wasteful use by them or to profit-making through reselling. The selling prices of materials will vary according to the kinds of enterprises and materials, with no subsidies, small subsidies or big subsidies. In the long term there will be no more subsidies. Besides, some types of materials, especially accumulated inventories, will be sold to other economic sectors to help meet part of their needs.

Some comrades have proposed the immediate application of the single-price system to all kinds of commodities and consequently a single yardstick of value. Otherwise, so they contend, there would be no way to prevent the multiplication of negative phenomena. Theoretically, that is a correct solution. However, in the present circumstances, it smacks of idealism. In any country, when supply and demand show serious imbalances and the rate of inflation is high, goods must be rationed and sold at fixed prices, for economic and also political reasons. Obviously, this is only a last resource. However, we have shown greater wisdom than in the past. We shall tightly limit the double-pricing system and shall not leave too big a gap between State-fixed prices and market prices. Also we shall make periodical readjustments so long as inflation remains high. That is a transitional measure, a transitional situation where two price mechanisms coexist until we can adopt a single-price system when conditions permit.

By the way, I would like to make a few remarks about learning from the experiences of friendly countries. We are behind others in socialist construction; we have little experience in this respect, in economic management in particular. So, it is necessary for us to learn from fraternal countries. The point is how. First of all, we must make full inquiries and strive to grasp the essence of the new economic forms others have applied, both in theory and in practice. Second, we must carefully study the circumstances and conditions of our economy, techniques, society and people before trying to apply these forms.

Thus, the application of foreign experiences to our country is a serious business which requires careful selection: It cannot be reduced to mechanical copying. In this connection, it would be very useful to recall Lenin's recommendations to the communists of the Caucasian republics after the October Revolution. He said that they could and should effect the transition to socialism more slowly, more carefully and more systematically than the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic because these republics "still show more of a peasant character than Russia" (*Complete Works* in Vietnamese, Volume 43, pp. 237-238).

III. On the Autonomy of Enterprises

The central issue proposed in the draft resolution of this plenum is the autonomy in production and trading of the State-owned economic units in their capacity as socialist producers of commodities. The draft resolution presents in a global and systematic way basic policies and measures, which include many new points. To save time, I would mention only some of the major questions.

For an enterprise to enjoy economic autonomy a key question is for it to have a secure supply of raw and other materials. In the present situation, most enterprises get their supplies from two sources: the State and self-procurement. Regarding State supplies, the State must inform the enterprise of their amount at an early date and deliver part of them, in good assortment before the beginning of the year of the plan. The self-procured materials may come from inside or outside the country. The grassroots units may receive imported materials through central or regional foreign-trade agencies, while a number of big enterprises may be allowed to carry out direct import and export operations in line with State policies and laws. With regard to materials available in the country, the State

should issue appropriate regulations aimed at avoiding two things: either to create obstacles to the enterprises' search for materials, or to provoke a chaotic situation on the market. However, in principle, in the present circumstances we should encourage the enterprises to multiply their sources of supply.

To permit self-procurement of materials is to recognize their market prices (though these prices are to be State-guided prices, not free-market prices), and they must be fully included in production costs. The State shall ensure the reasonable character of these prices in order neither to hurt the interests of the producers nor to let the latter operate blindly according to the free market and thus push prices up.

Since materials come from two sources, there will be two price systems. But an item produced by the same enterprise cannot be sold at two different prices. This problem should be discussed in order to find an answer. Should a single price system be calculated on the basis of the prices of materials coming from both sources ?

The autonomy of the enterprises can be ensured only when there exists an appropriate system of incentives. Here, the calculation of profits assumes prime importance. If profits are to be a percentage of the production costs of an enterprise, this will not encourage good management for the higher the production costs are, the more profits the producer will gain. In the new calculation, profits will be total receipts minus expenditures and remittances to the State. This means that the lower the production costs, the higher the profits. This will encourage economic competition, promote cost accounting and improve management. Each enterprise will put all its energies and capabilities into production, thus opening up real prospects for harmoniously satisfying all three categories of interests-those of the State, the collective and the individual worker.

I suggest that you discuss this question and find out if we can have a more reasonable and scientific way of calculating profits.

One of the important components of autonomy is financial autonomy. Generally speaking, the enterprise must cover its costs, ensure proper living conditions for its workers, and gain enough profits for expanding reproduction and meeting its obligations to the State. These are very high and very strict demands. To enable the enterprise to meet them, the State shall help it with funds in the following way : to allow it to keep the whole amortization fund ; to provide for a fixed rate of remittance to the State budget over a number of years ; to authorize the enterprise to raise funds in different ways ; to broaden its rights to use its property... In addition, the State shall also ensure autonomy for the enterprise in planning, in purchasing materials and marketing its products, in labour and wages, etc. I would like to stress that these rights are only the necessary conditions for the enterprise to conduct its production and trading operations fruitfully. They cannot by themselves lead to efficient production and trading. In order to operate profitably it is of decisive importance for the enterprise to give a strong boost to production. Whether production and profits are rising or not, whether it can improve the living conditions of its workers, expand its activities and increase its contributions to the State budget — all this depends on this crucial link. The enterprise must display initiative and dynamism, rationalize the organization of production, reduce intermediatry links and indirect labour, apply technical advances, economize on capital, materials, and energy to achieve ever higher product quality and lower costs.

...

The State-owned enterprise plays the leading role in the economy. This must be shown in higher productivity, product quality and economic efficiency compared with other economic sectors.

This will also be seen in the fact that the State-owned enterprise holds key economic and technological positions and sets the correct orientation for the other economic sectors. It also plays a key role in economic association and cooperation among different economic sectors. If this is done then we shall have reversed the present situation in which the State-owned economy lags behind the collective economy and even the individual and private capitalist economies.

The draft resolution has laid down the main principles for economic association and cooperation. However, it remains to devise appropriate organisational forms for each branch, and suitable mechanisms of management for joint ventures within the country and with foreign countries.

...

Another important factor for autonomy to the enterprise is the renovation of State management of the economy. The fundamental principle in this domain is to make a clear distinction between the direct management of production and trading by the grassroots economic units and the function of the State as a manager of the economy. This enables the State to concentrate on key links and domains of the national economy, to abstain from petty intervention in the activities of the enterprise and to create favourable conditions and a propitious environment for its productive and trading operations. The firmer the control the State exerts on key links and domains of the national economy, the more favourable conditions it will create for the economic units to operate dynamically and creatively without deviating from the orbit of a planned economy. We have defined some of the main points of our programme. However many points remain to be concretized such as the functions, tasks, powers and organisation of the apparatus and the mode of management of the Council of Ministers, the ministries and the central commissions, and of the administrations at the province, city, district, commune and city ward level. We should also make clear what agency is to be the immediate higher level of the grassroots economy unit. Then, the allocation of responsibilities and budgetary revenues must also be further clarified. In any case, just one session of the Central Committee cannot solve all the outstanding problems. What is comforting is that we have been able to raise the right questions and have shown high determination to renovate along the prescribed line.

Lastly, the renovation of economic management depends on this most crucial link, the question of cadres. Our body of economic cadres is, generally speaking, deficient in both number and quality; some are even of questionable morals and lack a proper working-class stand. What should be emphasized is that this situation is not due to any shortage of personnel but to poor planning, selection, training and employment. This is a very urgent task to which we must address ourselves promptly. To this end, we must have a correct view of the criteria for a good cadre. We must have a clear and concrete idea of the moral qualities and professional capabilities required of an economic manager, the characteristics of his occupation as compared with other kinds of work, and also what is required of economic cadres at different levels, and in different economic and technological branches. In the absence of a clear understanding of this question, it would be very difficult to work out a programme for the selection, training and evaluation of economic cadres.

6,685 PRISONERS AND INMATES OF RE-EDUCATION CAMPS RELEASED

On the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of the August Revolution and National Day (2 September), following Decision No. 11/HDNN of the Council of State and Directive No. 671/HDBT of the Chairman of the Council of ministers, 5,320 offenders have seen their prison terms reduced and 6,685 prisoners and re-education camp inmates have been released.

Among the latter were 480 former military and civilian personnel of the Saigon regime. They included 2 cabinet ministers, 18 senior administrative officials, 9 general officers, 248 field-grade officers and 117 company officers.

THE SRV BROADENS ITS RELATIONS OF COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP WITH ALL NATIONS ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY, MUTUAL BENEFIT AND MUTUAL RESPECT

Editor's Note: At the celebration of the 42nd anniversary of the August Revolution and National Day (2 September) held in Hanoi on 1 September 1987, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Hung delivered an important speech.
Below is the part dealing with the SRV's foreign policy.
The title is ours.

(...)

The world situation is undergoing rapid and important developments. The struggle between the revolutionary and peace forces on the one hand and the warlike imperialist forces on the other is going on unabated. The mighty growth of the three revolutionary currents together with the tempestuous development of the scientific and technological revolution, the danger of nuclear annihilation faced by mankind, and the objective requirement for the internationalization of economic life, have boosted the struggle for peaceful coexistence among nations with different social regimes.

With its strategy of comprehensive restructuring and its foreign policy of peace based on new revolutionary and scentific thinking, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries are taking real socialism forward to a new and qualitatively higher stage of development while developing their role as the central and a driving force behind the process of detente, pushing back the danger of a nuclear war and consolidating peace and security in the world.

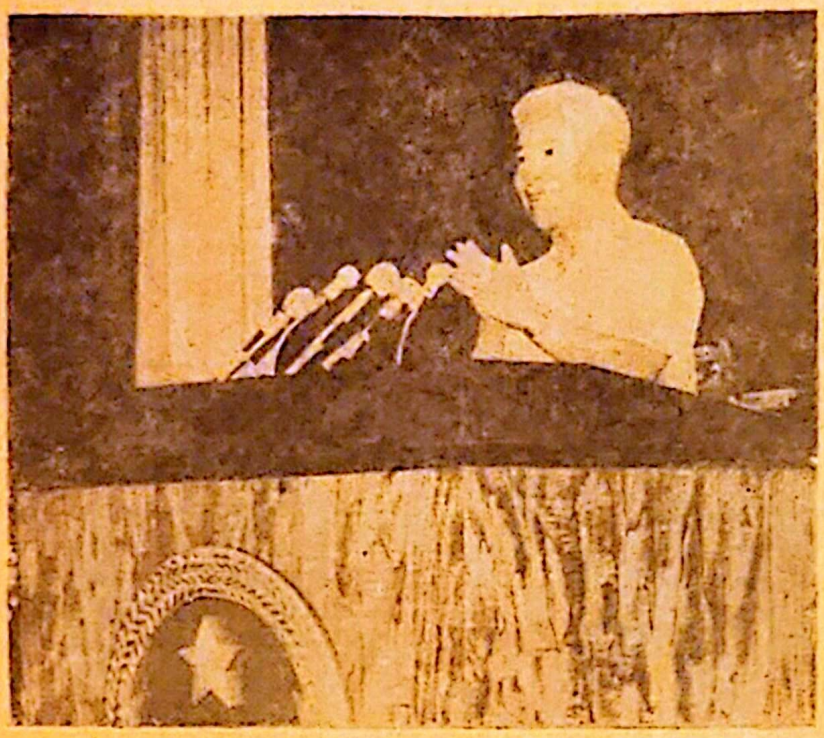
Regarding Asia and the Pacific, the famous initiative put forward by CPSU General Secretary M.S. Gorbachev in Vladivostok together with the untiring efforts of the Soviet Union are making important contributions to positive changes in the interests of peace, security and cooperation in this very important region of the world. Socialism has once again clearly proved its superiority and its great creative powers in advancing toward the goals of mankind, i.e., peace, national independence, democracy, and socialism.

With its noble objective of struggling for peace, disarmament, national independence, and an equitable world economic order, the Non-Aligned Movement is playing an ever greater role in international political life.

The US-led imperialists and other reactionary forces continue to step up the arms race and their activities against the nations struggling for peace, independence and development. However, they cannot reverse the positive trend of history.

In furtherance of the correct foreign policy of the Communist Party of Vietnam and actively applying the lesson they have learnt of combining the strength of our nation with that of our times, our Party, State and people have ceaselessly consolidated the special ties of friendship and strategic alliance between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, promoted and renovated our allround cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, strengthened our solidarity and cooperation with India, the national independent countries and all forces of peace and progress the world over. At the same time, we are prepared to develop equal and mutually beneficial cooperation with all other countries.

We particularly rejoice at the new development of the relations of fraternal cooperation between Vietnam and the Soviet Union as evidenced by the success of the visit to the Soviet Union by CPV General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh. In the spirit of renovation of the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the XXVIIth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the agreements reached during the visit on the basis of mutual benefit and assistance are being rapidly carried into effect and constitute an important basis for our national construction and defence. With gratitude and admiration, our people follow with keen interest and fully support the restructuring process now under way in the Soviet Union, and the successive famous peace initiatives and proposals put forward this year by CPSU General Secretary



M. S. Gorbachev aimed at ending the arms race and achieving disarmament, first of all, nuclear disarmament, for the sake of peace, security, and cooperation in Asia, the Pacific and across the world. With pride and enthusiasm over the greatest event of the 20th century, which heralded the beginning of a new era in the life of mankind, the Vietnamese people, together with the Soviet people and progressive forces the world over, are engaged in a seething emulation movement to greet the 70th anniversary of the Great Russian Socialist October Revolution and the splendid successes of restructuring in the land of the Great Lenin.

To contribute to finding a political solution to the Kampuchea issue and to making Southeast Asia a zone of peace, stability and cooperation is a goal of the foreign policy of the Vietnamese Party and Government at present. We fully support the Statement on the policy of national reconciliation issued by the People's Republic of Kampuchea on 27 August 1987. Together with the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, we have made many well-meaning proposals for an early, fair and reasonable political solution to the Kampuchea issue based on recognition of the Kampuchean people's right to independence, self-determination and national reconciliation, a solution that will ensure that the land of Angkor shall never again experience the horrible rule of the genocidal Pol Pot regime, and will pave the way for durable peace and stability in Southeast Asia. We affirm that the Vietnamese army volunteers will have completely withdrawn from Kampuchea by 1990. We note with satisfaction that the situation has evolved and is evolving in a positive direction. The agreements reached recently between Vietnam and Indonesia, representing the two groups of countries in the region, have opened up the prospect of a peaceful solution to the problems of Southeast Asia and the Kampuchea issue. The settlement of the Kampuchea issue and of the question of peace and stability in Southeast Asia is consistent with the resolution of the 7th Non-Aligned Summit, which was later reaffirmed by the 8th Summit. We call on all parties concerned to show their good will and join efforts in order to turn this possibility into reality.

The peoples of Vietnam and China have at one time united and helped each other in their revolutionary struggles for national independence and socialism. There is no contradiction between the aspirations of the two nations, neither is there any contradiction between the long-term interests of the two peoples. Therefore, we have been striving persistently to normalize our relations with China and restore the longstanding friendship between the two nations.

Having experienced several decades of sacrifices and hardships in successive wars of resistance against foreign aggressions we, more than anyone else, know the value of peace and independence. For that reason, Vietnam will continue to make active contributions to the common struggle for peace and international security, for national independence, for a new and equitable world economic order, and the noble goals of the Non-Aligned Movement. We acclaim the peace accord recently signed by the heads of five Central American countries. We resolutely support the struggle against imperialism and all forms of colonialism and racism, for independence, freedom and progress, of the peoples of South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chile, Palestine, Lebanon, Sahrawi... We support the just struggle of the Korean people for peaceful and self-determined reunification of their country, the policy of national reconciliation of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, and the efforts aimed at ending the Iran-Iraq war on the basis of the legitimate interests of both nations.

For the sake of national construction and defence, we are ready to broaden our relations of cooperation and friendship with all nations on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect. ●

(...)

AN INITIATIVE FROM PHNOM PENH

On 27 August 1987 in Phnom Penh, the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea issued a "Declaration on the policy of national reconciliation of the People's Republic of Kampuchea". This was an event of great importance in the political life of the fraternal Kampuchean people. It reflected the high sense of responsibility and the goodwill of the People's Revolutionary Party and the Government of Kampuchea with regard to the destiny of the country and the aspirations of the people. This policy of national reconciliation is a great, long-term and sincere policy aimed at uniting all the forces of the Kampuchean people in order to realize great national unity, and national reconstruction, and to build a progressive and prosperous Kampuchea bringing a happy life to all Kampucheans.

At the same time, the declaration of the Kampuchean Government on the policy of national reconciliation contained concrete, practical, sincere and humane measures aimed at creating conditions for every Kampuchean to have a worthy place in the great united national community living in the peaceful country of Angkor.

With regard to Khmer groups on the other side and their ringleaders, the Government of the PRK is ready to meet them except the criminal Pol Pot and a number of his close collaborators, in order to discuss national reconciliation on the basis of never allowing a return of the genocidal regime, and for them to join the entire people in defending and building the country in peace and stability.

The newly published reconciliation policy is not only a major policy of the PRK which shows that it is a government by the people and for the people but also reflects the sincere aspiration of every Kampuchean patriot for a fine and stable development of his homeland. The adoption of the national reconciliation policy is the result of the allsided growth of the PRK after eight years of revival. The achievements of the Kampuchean people's struggle for the defence and building of their homeland have created conditions for further strengthening national unity in the common interests of the whole nation. This national reconciliation policy conforms to the general trend of our era. ●

THE CULTURE ...

(Continued from page 3)

Publishing House will strive to raise the quality of its publications even further. Theoretical and research works will assume more attractive forms and their contents freed from stereotypes and generalities. Particular attention will be paid to those dealing with the building of a new life and the formation of the new man. Worthy of note is the recent publication of *Legend of the Jade Yardstick*, a collection of one hundred foreign humorous stories, all written in a lively style and rich in imagery. Regrettably, it was printed in only 60,000 copies, whereas it is estimated that 150,000 copies would come nearer customers' requirements.

Publications on cultural personalities, a favourite with the reading public will be further upgraded. In addition to monographs on famous figures of the past, *Van Hoa* plans to put out a new series of biographical surveys, each of which will comprise vivid accounts of the most remarkable episodes in the lives of a number of prominent men and women of culture.

Cooperation between the Culture Publishing House and its counterparts in the Soviet Union, the GDR, Hungary, Laos, Kampuchea... has developed satisfactorily in the past and will be further strengthened. Conditions permitting it will be extended to publishing houses in other countries.

HONG SON

DECLARATION
ON THE POLICY OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KAMPUCHEA

Heirs to the brilliant Angkor civilization, the Kampuchean people have evinced traditional industriousness and creativity and perseveringly and valiantly struggled for their homeland's independence, sovereignty, freedom, prosperity and happiness.

After smashing the genocidal Pol Pot — Ieng Sary regime, whose barbarity is without precedent in the history of mankind, our people have for more than eight years now resolutely struggled for national revival. Patriotic overseas Kampucheans have shown constant concern for the destiny of their homeland, and have actively contributed to national reconstruction. Many Kampucheans who had been misled and had followed the enemy, have awaked. They have left the other side and returned to the people.

However, because the reactionary forces, in particular, the surviving genocidal criminals, have not yet given up their sinister schemes against the rebirth of the Kampuchean people, we have not yet enjoyed real peace and stability.

Prompted by goodwill and a high sense of responsibility toward the nation's destiny, and in response to the sacred aspiration of the Kampuchean people, the People's Republic of Kampuchea makes public its policy of national reconciliation, which is as follows:

1. The policy of national reconciliation is a long-term and sincere policy aimed at uniting all Kampucheans with patriotic ideals into a monolithic union for the building of a progressive, equal and just society. All Kampucheans, whatever their past, social class, ideology, religion or ethnic group, can effectively cooperate with one another to build an independent, peaceful and non-aligned Kampuchea having friendly relations with its neighbours, and to prevent all attempts at re-establishing the genocidal regime which has been strongly condemned and categorically rejected by the Kampuchean people and world public opinion.

2. The People's Republic of Kampuchea is prepared to meet Khmer groups on the other side and their leaders, except the criminal Pol Pot and some of his close collaborators, in order to conduct discussions on national reconciliation based on the prevention of any return in future of the danger of genocide, and for them to join the entire people in defending and rebuilding the country in peace and stability.

3. The People's Republic of Kampuchea hails the patriotism of overseas Kampuchean personalities and intellectuals and other compatriots, who have contributed and are contributing in many ways to national reconstruction. The Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea hails the participation of overseas Kampucheans in national defence and reconstruction and creates all favourable conditions for them to continue to do so, each according to his or her capabilities. Those who wish to return home to serve the country will be considered for tasks commensurate with their capabilities and contributions.

4. As stated in the six-point policy dated 18 August 1984, the People's Republic of Kampuchea regards those who were deceived and cajoled into serving groups on the other side as victims of those reactionary forces, and their families as unfortunate families. The People's Republic of Kampuchea appeals to them to return to their families and to the people, and to work and earn an honest living under the law.

Those who had been deceived by the other side but have awaked and now decide to return home will enjoy their civic rights including the right to vote and to stand for election. They will be assisted in their re-settlement, in finding jobs and in reuniting with their families. Those who have rendered meritorious services to the country will be commended and rewarded.

5. Those armed groups of the other side who now see where justice is, give up their hostile activities against the people and present themselves before the revolutionary authorities will be welcomed and will enjoy the rights of citizens of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. If they have accomplished meritorious deeds before presenting themselves to the revolutionary authorities, they will be given special rewards. If they wish to serve the country, the competent organs will examine their cases and assign them work to be done.

6. The People's Republic of Kampuchea sympathizes with the sufferings of those compatriots who are still living in refugee camps in Thailand. The People's Republic of Kampuchea calls on the Thai authorities and on international organizations to take measures to put an immediate end to the use of refugee camps for military and political purposes against the Kampuchean people, to the forcible conscription of inmates of refugee camps, to the misappropriation of humanitarian aid to the refugees, and to all terrorist acts against people living in camps under the control of reactionary forces. Armed elements must be removed from the refugee camps, which must be entirely put under the supervision of international humanitarian organizations.

In order to put an end to the sufferings of Kampuchean refugees in Thailand, the People's Republic of Kampuchea is prepared to discuss their orderly and organized repatriation with international humanitarian organizations and all concerned parties.

Kampuchean refugees who return under the above repatriation programme will be assisted by the People's Republic of Kampuchea authorities to reunite with their families and to live a normal life.

The People's Republic of Kampuchea welcomes all initiatives consistent with the principles and contents of this policy.

The Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea appeals to all Kampucheans living in the country or abroad to take an active part in the process of national reconciliation so that the country can enjoy real peace and stability, and to join efforts to build a plentiful and happy life for themselves, thus contributing a worthy part to the struggle for peace and stability in Southeast Asia and the world. ●

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ASIAN – PACIFIC REGION

LE BA THUYEN

One year has elapsed since 28 July 1986 when CPSU General Secretary M.S. Gorbachev made his famous Vladivostok Statement on a comprehensive peace programme for the Asian-Pacific region. The situation in this strategic region has seen new developments in the struggle for peace, against the danger of nuclear war, and its ever closer links with the struggle for independence and development.

As M.S. Gorbachev pointed out, "the crucial issue in this area is that of nuclear weapons". At the time of the Vladivostok Statement, the militarisation policy of the Reagan Administration was being dangerously stepped up, aggravating the danger of nuclear war in the region and threatening to make the Pacific a theatre of politico-military confrontation. Over the past year Washington has continued to pursue this sinister design. However, the demand for the conversion of Asia and the Pacific into a denuclearized and peaceful region has developed into an unprecedentedly vigorous movement especially among the people in the archipelagoes of the South Pacific. The adoption by the New Zealand parliament of a bill banning all nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered foreign war ships from entering its ports has received widespread support inside and outside the region. The conclusion of the Rarotonga Treaty by thirteen nations in the region aimed at transforming the South Pacific into a nuclear-free region has had wide repercussions, and lays a legal basis for eventually achieving the denuclearisation of the region.

In Southeast Asia, Indonesia's concept of a nuclear-free zone has also received warm support from broad sections of public opinion. Meanwhile, the protest movement of the people against the maintenance of US military bases in the country — where US nuclear weapons are deployed — is reaching new heights. Reflecting this popular demand, the Manila Government has included anti-nuclear provisions in its basic laws. In Northeast Asia, the 23 July 1987 proposal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to turn the Korean peninsula into a peaceful nuclear-free area is a positive contribution to easing tension in this hot spot. The struggle of the Japanese people, victims of the Hiroshima disaster, against the danger of nuclear war has continued to grow powerfully. Many more Japanese localities and cities have declared themselves nuclear-free zones. In South Asia, the policy aimed at transforming the Indian Ocean into a peaceful region without nuclear weapons has received ever greater approval and support from the nations on the rim of this ocean. The important initiatives of the Soviet Union on the reduction and eventual elimination of all medium-range and strategic weapons put forward at the Soviet-US summit meeting in Reykjavik followed by the Soviet Union's declaration of its intention to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Asian-Pacific region, were a great encouragement to the movement of the peoples in the region for a peaceful, secure and nuclear-free region.

Also in the past year, the settlement of problems in the hot spots of the region has seen new progress which strengthens the hope that nations could patch up their differences through peaceful negotiations. The policy of national reconciliation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has scored an impressive initial success. A growing number of self-exiled people have returned to their homeland. The Soviet Union's unilateral decision to withdraw a number of armed units from Afghanistan bears witness to its desire to reach an early political solution to the problems around Afghanistan. In Southeast Asia, the dialogue between the ASEAN and the Indochinese countries is moving forward, though still slowly. The policy of national reconciliation of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, which is opening its arms to all Kampucheans who really love their country and their people, is creating favourable conditions for working out a correct political solution that would ensure peace, independence and national sovereignty for the Kampuchean people. The good will of the three Indochinese peoples who stand ready to cooperate with all other parties in the region to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding, is helping to promote dialogue in the interest of peace, stability and cooperation with the ultimate objective of making Southeast Asia free from nuclear weapons and military confrontation. In the Middle East, although the situation continues to evolve in a complicated way, the successful meeting of the Palestine National Council marked an initial important step toward the restoration of unity and solidarity within the Palestine resistance movement and among the Arab countries. The proposal for holding an international conference on the Middle East and the Resolution of the UN Security Council aimed at solving peacefully the Iraq — Iran conflict are also positive steps which are gaining widespread support.

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The alliance between the forces of socialism, independence, democracy and peace in the region is being strengthened and developed. That is another prominent trait of the recent developments and an important factor for peace and security in Asia and the Pacific. The great success crowning the visit to the Soviet Union by Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, was a new and important contribution to developing the fraternal relations and consolidating the strategic alliance and all-round cooperation between the two Parties, States and peoples, giving a vigorous boost to their common struggle for peace and stability in Asia, the Pacific and the rest of the world. Likewise, the friendship visit of CPSU General Secretary M.S. Gorbachev to the Republic of India, the historic New Delhi Declaration on the principles of a world free from nuclear weapons and violence, and the recent visit to the Soviet Union by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi have been important events and significant land-

(Continued on page 16)

THE STRENGTH OF THE NATION AND THAT OF THE TIME

PHAN DOAN

EDITOR'S NOTE:

One of the theses put forward at the Sixth National Congress of the CPV is that the Vietnamese revolution has known how to combine "the strength of the nation and that of the time," thus creating an aggregate force which has taken it forward from victory to victory.

In an article published in Tap chi Cong san (Review of Communism), the theoretical and political organ of the CPV, issue of May last, Phan Doan, a foreign policy analyst, made a study of this thesis in the light of the present requirements for the country's economic development.

Below is an excerpt from the article. The title is ours.

* * *

The new characteristics of the political and economic situation in the world at present require us policy-makers to devise new methods of thinking and action when applying the lessons we have learnt in combining the strength of the nation and that of the time. This means that we must urgently renovate our thinking about the political and economic situation in the world and about our country's economic cooperation with other countries.

On the political and security plane, we must turn to account peace in the world and in the coming 10 — 15 years concentrate on rebuilding the country after many years of war. This background of peace requires us to renovate our thinking about national security and how to safeguard it. This is because, in the present world context, no country, however powerful, can defend its security by itself if it separates this question from world and regional security. No country, whatever its size, can create for itself better security than that of the others. The security of the nations must be assured for all and on an equal footing within the general framework of world security. Security for each nation is not to be purely military security but comprehensive security, with emphasis on economic security. Therefore, the best way to safeguard our security is to tie it to the system of world security, especially in the Asian-Pacific region and Southeast Asia. How can this be done? By increasing our contribution to the joint struggle of the Soviet Union, the other socialist countries, the non-aligned countries, and other progressive forces, for peace, disarmament, and the gradual elimination of nuclear weapons from our planet. We must carry on our joint struggle with the fraternal Lao and Kampuchean peoples and the other nations in Southeast Asia aimed at turning it into a region of peace, friendship and cooperation. First of all, Southeast Asia must be made a nuclear-free zone. Only in the context of general peace in the world and the region can we firmly safeguard our own security and reserve the major part of our human and material resources for national construction. The new thinking on security and how to defend it, in the new situation, will help us work out good solutions to development problems.

On the economic plane, the combination of the strength of our nation with that of our time also requires that we renovate our views on a series of development-related problems.

First, we must renovate our view of independence and sovereignty while planning our economic strategy. An independent and sovereign economy is not an autarkic economy, which produces everything it needs and imports nothing from the outside. While working out our economic strategy, we must take new factors into account, i.e. the level of internationalization of the world economy, the trend toward association in the international division of labour, the interdependence of national economies, etc. Given the present level of development of productive forces in the world, no country, however rich and powerful, can develop its economy while keeping it divorced from the world economy and avoiding dependence on other countries. Dependence here means "interdependence", not one-way dependence. It is this "interdependence" which makes for equality in international economic relations, or at least creates a trend toward equality. It also serves as a firm basis for the struggle waged by the non-aligned countries against developed capitalist countries with a view to the establishment of a new economic order, marked by justice and rationality.

Second, we must have a correct perception of the relationship between the safeguarding of national security and the broadening of international cooperation. It would be impossible to broaden international economic cooperation without allowing foreign experts, traders, and tourists to enter the country. How to safeguard national security while engaging in cooperation with foreign countries? We must study and resolve this question in order to expand, instead of restricting, international cooperation. This is the responsibility not only of the security services but also that of the entire Party and the entire people, especially cadres working in the field of foreign relations.

Third, we must correctly settle the relationship between multiplying our economic relations and continuing to consolidate and strengthen our cooperation and association with the socialist countries in the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). Vietnam is a developing country advancing to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development. For this reason, our foreign economic relations will be primarily with the socialist countries. This is an objective law. The socialist countries, for their part, regard their effort to help in our economic development and to narrow the gap between member countries of CMEA as their internationalist duty.

On the other hand, our national economy being part of the world economy, the development of

economic relations with other countries is also a necessity. However, this multiplication of our foreign economic relations is aimed at complementing and enriching our cooperation with the socialist countries. The more effective and fruitful our cooperation with the socialist countries, the more possibilities will be created for multiplying our relations with other countries. This will be in the interest of both our country and the socialist community. Such relations are complementary, not mutually exclusive.

Fourth, we must hold firmly to the principle of equality and mutual benefit in our economic relations with other countries. For cooperation between countries to be long-lasting and profitable, it must be equal and mutually beneficial, whether it be between socialist or capitalist countries. In our cooperation with socialist countries, it goes without saying that they will respect our interests, but we too must respect theirs. Otherwise, negative consequences will ensue.

With regard to capitalist countries or companies, there should be no reason why they should abstain from profitable business relations with us. We must, while preserving our interests, show them that cooperation with us is profitable to them. This requires us to have a body of competent experts and to renovate the mechanism of our economic management. Only then will it be possible for us to turn to account world capital and technology for the benefit of our socialist building.

In the coming period, the combination of the strength of the nation with that of the time may follow three main orientations:

First, we must strive to win assistance from our friends, the socialist countries in particular. This is an objective law which will operate for a long time to come. In order to win friendly assistance, the first condition is to make an effective use of this assistance, turning the fruits of other peoples' labour into material and spiritual forces boosting our own growth. Friendly assistance has no political strings attached, but we must impose upon ourselves this obligation: we must make an effective use of the assistance of our friends so that both our own strength and that of the socialist community shall benefit. Our friends should not have to suffer from too many burdens.

Second, we must determine an optimum position for our country in the socialist economic system and in the world system. This is no simple matter. It calls for profound knowledge of world economic and technological problems, of the development strategies of various nations, of our own economic problems, of our strengths and weaknesses in making use of scientific and technological achievements, so that we may play an ever more important role in the international division of labour. Our participation in the comprehensive programme of scientific and technological progress within CMEA, and the three major economic programmes laid down at the Sixth National Congress of our Party for the coming Five-Year Plan, especially the programme for export, are initial steps in this direction.

Third, we must learn from the experience gathered in the world in the use of scientific and technological advances and try to find the shortest and least costly route leading to industrialization and a long-term strategy for economic development. Particular attention must be paid to the experience gained by countries with initial level of development comparable to our own, especially those in Southeast Asia and South Asia. ●

NEW DEVELOPMENT ...

(Continued from page 14)

marks on the road to the consolidation of Soviet-Indian friendship, an important factor in international politics. The first visits to a number of countries in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific by Soviet Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze have helped enhance mutual understanding and mutually beneficial relations between the Soviet Union and the countries in the region. The consultative meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in the Asian-Pacific region, held in Ulan Bator (Mongolia) recently, is eloquent proof that the communists, together with all forces of independence and peace, play a vanguard role in the struggle for peace and security in the region.

Meanwhile, the Reagan Administration has on the one hand actively deployed its new strategy in Asia and the Pacific aimed at turning this region into a second front in its global counter-revolutionary design against the Soviet Union, the forces of revolution, national independence and peace in the whole world. On the other hand, it is trying to oppose the new advanoe of the movement for peace and revolution in the region. Washington is carrying on its "new global strategy" by continuing to support the rebel forces against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the People's Republic of Kampuchea, refusing to sign the Rarotonga Treaty, trying its best to torpedo the movement for the denuclearisation of the South Pacific, preventing the realisation of the policy of transforming Southeast Asia into a nuclear-free zone, strengthening the Northeast Asian military alliance, consolidating the shaky ANZUS military alliance, trying to contain the explosive situation facing pro-American regimes in South Korea, Pakistan, Thailand, etc. In face of those manœuvres of the United States and other reactionary forces, the forces of revolution, peace and progress in the region must heighten their vigilance, strengthen their solidarity, and wage a resolute struggle to check and defeat all their sinister schemes.

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The new initiative of the Soviet Union put forward by M.S. Gorbachev in an interview with the Indonesian paper *Merdeka* on 21 July last proceeded from the Soviet Union's "global double zero" concept. It affirms the Soviet Union's readiness to dismantle all medium-range missiles including those positioned on its Asian territory, on condition that the United States does the same. This important proposal is a great Soviet contribution to the struggle for peace of the peoples of Asia and the Pacific and across the world, and gives a vigorous boost to the effort to establish a comprehensive international security system. The appeal made by M.S. Gorbachev one year ago in Vladivostok, calling on all countries in the Asian-Pacific region to cooperate for peace and security still echoes in the region. It reflects the good will and firm determination of the Soviet Union and the socialist community to unite with the forces of national independence, peace and progress in the region and to carry on the struggle for a durable peace on this increasingly important continent and ocean of the world. ●

25 YEARS OF VIETNAM – LAOS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

On 5 September 1962, diplomatic relations were established between Vietnam and Laos.

Over the past 25 years, the two Parties and peoples have together undergone numerous trials. They have successfully defended and constantly strengthened their militant solidarity.

Since 1975, this special relationship has been ever more consolidated, strengthened and developed. The signing of the Vietnam-Laos Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation on 18 July 1977 marked a new qualitative development of this relationship. Over the past ten years since then the militant solidarity and all-round cooperation between Vietnam and Laos have developed in scope and in depth in all spheres, contributing to each country's national construction and defence. The identity of views and the coordination of the diplomatic activities of Vietnam and Laos, and of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, have contributed to enhancing their international prestige. Peace initiatives full of goodwill made by the three countries have been welcomed and widely supported in the region and in the world.

All-round cooperation relations have been maintained amid a tense and complicated situation in Southeast Asia and in the world. The two peoples have had to cope with repeated schemes and acts of the imperialist and other reactionary forces aimed at sowing division between them, and between them and Kampuchea, and at isolating the three countries from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Therefore, it has become more urgent than ever to strengthen solidarity and all-round cooperation between Vietnam and Laos and between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, in order to foil all enemy schemes.

The 25th anniversary of the establishment of Vietnam-Laos diplomatic relations takes place at a time when their peoples and the people of Kampuchea are striving for national construction and defence. Strongly determined to carry out profound renovation, the people of Vietnam will spare no efforts to upgrade Vietnam-Laos cooperation, thus contributing to the strengthening of the economic potentials of the three fraternal Indochinese countries in the interests of their peoples and those of peace and stability in Southeast Asia and in the world.

On this occasion, the Vietnamese people once again express their sincere and deep gratitude to the Lao people for their valuable support to the Vietnamese revolution. We firmly believe that the Lao people, under the leadership of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party headed by General Secretary Kaysone Phomvihane, will score ever more achievements in socialist construction.

DISARMAMENT: A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR DEVELOPMENT

World public opinion, especially in the newly-independent states, has attentively followed the international conference on the relationship between disarmament and development organized by the UN in New York with the participation of 160 member countries.

Progressive people across the world welcome this conference, the first of its kind, and consider it to be an important international event, in a worldwide scrutiny of the organic relationship between two important problems of our time: disarmament and development. But Washington chose to boycott the conference.

The present arms race devours more than 1,000 billion dollars each year, imposing a heavy burden on all nations, hampering the economic development of all countries including the USA, and is a veritable disaster for all developing countries. Yet the Reagan Administration claims that there is no formal link between disarmament and development: obviously the US argument is a sophistry.

The young independent countries urged by Washington to join in the arms race face three dangers:

Firstly, they have to buy weapons, and military equipment from Western countries, mostly from the US, at high prices, and have to set aside an ever greater part of their GNP for military expenditure. They have to reduce their socio-economic investments and as a result, they are not only attached to the US war chariot but will continue to be kept in poverty and backwardness.

Secondly, with the payments for weapons accounting for about 275 billion dollars out of their total foreign debt of 1,100 billion dollars, and with the high interest rates demanded by the banks, they have to pay annual interests which amount to dozens of billions of dollars and take up an important part of their foreign-currency earnings from exports.

Thirdly, the burden of military expenditure and harsh exploitation at the hands of multi-national companies prevent the developing countries from solving their many serious socio-economic problems: 1,000 milion people suffering from malnutrition and starvation, 1,000 million illiterates and hundreds of millions deprived of medical care.

Even for developed capitalist countries, the huge expenditures of the arms race have negatively affected their economies.

Loyal to their ideal and responsive to the eager aspirations of all nations, the USSR and other socialist countries have in the past decades taken many important initiatives for peace, disarmament and development. These programmes, especially that

for nuclear disarmament by the year 2000, put forward by M.S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU, constitute a great comprehensive programme which would liberate mankind from the nightmare of a nuclear holocaust as the 21st century begins. At the same time, the huge sums of money thus released will positively contribute to the economic development of all nations. The latest Soviet proposal on the holding of a special meeting of all members of the UN Security Council, — the highest organ responsible for maintaining peace and international security according to the UN Charter — for discussing problems of disarmament and development, and the Soviet proposal on establishing an international fund to be named « Disarmament for development » within the framework of the UN, for the transfer to countries in need of the money released by disarmament, are initiatives full of goodwill which meet the aspiration of all nations.

The Vietnamese people, victim of successive wars of aggression over the past four decades, yearn for peace and development. That is why they fully support the principle of « disarmament for development »; fully approve of the Soviet proposals for peace and disarmament; heartily agree with the proposal to turn Asia and the Pacific into a region of peace, security and good neighbourliness; and fully support the stepping up of dialogue with a view to turning Southeast Asia into a zone of peace and development, free from nuclear weapons and military confrontation.

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TENSION IN THE PERSIAN GULF AND US RESPONSIBILITY

The situation in the Persian Gulf has further deteriorated due to Washington's policy of intervention. Profits from oil and the strategic significance of the region have since long deeply involved the US imperialists in the Gulf region. From the 1960s onwards, they have gradually pushed back the influence of Britain, France and other western countries. Within a short time, they have set up a dense system of military bases stretching from the Strait of Hormuz to Oman and other countries in the Gulf. Along with the invasion of US monopoly capital, military agreements have been signed between the US and Gulf countries.

In the late 70's and early 80's, proclaiming the Gulf area to be "a major strategic zone", and "one of vital importance to the US", Washington dispatched there more and more warships, aircraft, and marines. When the Iran-Iraq war broke out, it promptly pursued a double-dealing policy in the region aimed at fishing in troubled waters. Particularly since early this year, the ambiguous character of US policy has been further exposed. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Washington ought to have helped implement its Resolution 598. Instead, it has continued to add fuel to the fire.

By urging its NATO partners to join in its new military adventures, Washington has been attempting to internationalize the problem, and aggravate the crisis. It has urged them to serve its selfish interests in the Gulf, fanned up the flames of hostilities among Arab countries, and sought to divide and weaken them in order to pull them into the American orbit.

The above US actions are clearly in contravention of the collective efforts of the UN Security Council and of the world community aimed at ending the Iran-Iraq war and creating a wholesome atmosphere in the Gulf. These actions and those of US allies run counter to the will and aspiration of the forces of peace, national independence and social progress in the region and in other parts of the world.

The situation in the Gulf continues to evolve in a complicated way. Public opinion in the world, including the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, holds that in order to settle the crisis in the Gulf, it is necessary to withdraw all foreign ships immediately from the region, put an end to the Iran-Iraq war, and find a political solution acceptable to all parties concerned.

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PEACE AND STABILITY FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

Surmounting many abstacles raised by the United States, a Summit conference of five Central American countries was convened on 6 and 7 August 1987 in Guatemala City, at which their State leaders signed an agreement opening up new possibilities for peace and stability in Central America, of which here are the main points: Within 90 days, the five countries in Central America would conduct negotiations between Government and opposition forces; an end to aid to the latter and to the use of the territory of one country for subversive activities against another. Concerning Nicaragua, the United States would have to stop giving support to the mercenary troops in their activities against Nicaragua, and giving financial aid to the Contras, and must respect

(Continued on page 21)

SOVIET LITERATURE IN VIETNAM

Editor's Note: Following is the first part of an article entitled "A study of Vietnamese - Soviet cultural interflow" by PHAN HONG GIANG, published in Tap Chi Cong San (Review of Communism) in July 1987. The title is ours.

Nguyen Ai Quoc, who was to become President Ho Chi Minh, was the first Vietnamese to be enlightened by the October Revolution and Leninism. He was also the first to come into contact with classical Russian literature and Soviet literature.

Nguyen Ai Quoc came to the Soviet Union in 1923, but he was not able to meet Lenin, the great leader of the world proletariat, before his death.

On 27 January 1924, the day of Lenin's funeral, the paper *Pravda* carried an article by Nguyen Ai Quoc entitled "Lenin and the Colonial Peoples". Late in 1930, Nguyen Ai Quoc wrote "Diary of a Shipwrecked Man", a 24-chapter story about a shipwrecked sailor who landed on Soviet shore. Written in simple, easy to understand language, this was the first literary attempt by a Vietnamese to portray the land of the October Revolution and of the great Lenin. The foundation of the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930 ushered in a new era for Vietnamese revolutionary literature. Ever since then Soviet literature has had an ever greater influence on Vietnamese revolutionary literature.

During the administration of the Popular Front in France in 1936-39, the Indochinese Communist Party operated openly in Indochina and revolutionary publications occupied a prominent place on the literary scene in Vietnam. The public was introduced through French translations, to such major Soviet works as "The Mother" by M. Gorki, "How the Steel Was Tempered" by N. Ostrovski, "Steel" by A. Serafimovich, and "Cement" by F. Gladkov.

Many people were converted to revolutionary views by these books. In 1939, "the Mother" was translated into Vietnamese by a poet, Nguyen Thuong Khanh (also known as Tran Mai Ninh) and was serialized in the paper *"Nguoi Moi"* (The New Man). It made a very strong impact on the reading public. The Land of the Soviets, which had been the subject of many of Nguyen Ai Quoc's writings and of underground revolutionary literature, now became an openly-discussed topic, in To Huu's poems, in a serialized press report entitled "Three Years in Soviet Russia" written by Tran Dinh Long in 1938.

To Marxists in Vietnam at that time, the ideological and aesthetic principles of Soviet literature as expounded in the works of Gorki, the founder of socialist realism, were a solid theoretical basis for their studies and discussions of the role of art.

That the Marxist-Leninist line for culture and art was creatively applied to Vietnam was clear from the "Cultural Programme for Vietnam" issued by the Indochinese Communist Party in 1943 and the report on Marxism and culture in Vietnam made by Truong-Chinh to the Second National Conference on Culture in 1948.

As early as 1946, "The Mother" was published in Vietnamese

translation despite the very difficult situation facing the country: the young Democratic Republic of Vietnam was being threatened with foreign aggression, internal sabotage and famine. That same year, the paper "Cuu Quoc" (National Salvation) ran a number of chapters from Solokhov's "And Quiet Flows the Don."

During the war against the French colonialists, the few French translations of Soviet novels available in resistance bases were treasured and passed from hand to hand. The literary critic Hoai Thanh and some of his colleagues copied by hand the whole French translation of Solokhov's "Virgin Land Upturned."

Following the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and other people's democracies in January 1950, the introduction of Soviet literature into Vietnam was accelerated. The public was brought into contact with works by K. Simonov, B. Polevoi, I. Ehrenburg, V. Vasilevskaia, A. Serafimovich, and others. Ho Chi Minh himself, busy as he was with state affairs, managed to translate into Vietnamese A. Fedorov's "The Underground Provincial Committee". The translation and publication of reports by Gorki and Jdanov at the First Congress of Soviet Writers (1934) was a significant event in literary criticism in Vietnam.

An important milestone in Vietnamese-Soviet cultural cooperation was the cultural cooperation agreement signed on 15 February 1957 between the two governments in Hanoi. Article 3 of the agreement provides for "encouragement to be given to the translation of each country's literary works in the other." Whereas in the years of the anti-French resistance war translation of Soviet literary works into Vietnamese was only casual and mostly done through a third language — Chinese or French, beginning in the late 50's and the early 60's it was undertaken on a large scale and done mainly from the Russian originals. The general public was thus able to enjoy works of great ideological and literary value such as "How the Steel Was Tempered", "The Young Guard", "Chapaev", "And Quiet Flows the Don", "Virgin Land Upturned", "The Road of Torments", "Pedagogical Poem", "The Harvest", "The Tempest".

Since national reunification, Vietnam has been in a position to expand cultural exchanges with foreign countries. Priority has been given to cooperation with the Soviet Union and the socialist community as a whole.

Now, after thirty years of war, the public is thirsty for cultural value from other countries and other times, first of all the Soviet Union and other socialist countries with particular emphasis on modern works depicting Soviet people at work. The great changes taking place in socialist construction in Vietnam and the successes recorded by Soviet writers in portraying the struggle between good and evil, between the new and the old, have combined to bring the Vietnamese public and Soviet literature even closer together. Whereas in the past, Vietnamese readers sought in Soviet books an image of their own future, now they also find in them treatment of contemporary problems facing their own society. Hence, a qualitative change in the reader's attitude — from a desire to know to a consciousness of identity.

Soviet literature has contributed in a significant way to the shaping of socialist personality in Vietnam. V. Ovetskin's "Daily Occurrences in a District" has drawn great interest not only from literary circles, but also from the general public for its bold and incisive ideas on how to select Party cadres at the grassroots. The novel has gone through many editions and has been the subject of heated discussions on how to improve Party leadership in agriculture and other spheres of activity. Other thought-provoking novels are "The Law of Eternity" by N. Dumbadze, "Sleepless Nights" by A. Kron, "Choice" by Yuri Bondarev, "A Look Back Halfway through Life" by Y. Trifonov, "My Daghestan" by R. Gamdatov, "The Gallows" by T. Aimatov, "The Fire" by V. Rasputin. Translators have also done a great deal to introduce the public works by Soviet critics and researchers like B. Suskov, M. Khravchenko, A. Ovcharenko and G. Posperlov, whose writings constitute one of the main trends in literary research in the world today. At the same time, Vietnamese writers, thanks to the literary reviews, are kept abreast of literary events in the Soviet Union and can thus ponder fruitfully over our own problems.

The frank, sober assessment of the present state of Soviet literature, made at the 27th CPSU Congress and the Central Committee Plenum held in January this year shows how exacting the Soviet public has become in this sphere of intellectual life. All spheres of activity in the Soviet Union are being revitalized by the spirit of renovation, the democratization of Soviet society, and the acceleration strategy. Soviet writers, following their Eighth Congress, will certainly produce even more works dealing with and providing solutions to burning problems facing society and man, thus further enhancing the prestige of Soviet literature in world culture.

The Vietnamese public eagerly looks forward to new Soviet literary works which are sure to assist in the renovation of Vietnamese literature. ●

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1. Evidence of this event can be seen at the Gorki Museum in Moscow. See also M.B. Kozmin's "The Novel 'The Mother' in Vietnam," Soviet Archives Review, 1968, No. 2, pp. 75 - 83, in Russian.

EUROPEAN OPERA AND BALLET IN VIETNAM

In May 1961, the opera Eugen Onegin was performed in Hanoi, its first performance ever in Vietnam and received wide acclaim.

Twenty-six years have passed. The spectators of that performance are now a great deal older. Most of them experienced a lot of hardships in the war for the liberation of South Vietnam and for national reunification. But they certainly still remember that performance of the famous opera by Tchaikovsky based on a story by Pushkin.

That spring, D.G. Badrigia, Soviet People's Artiste and Lenin prize winner, selected Vietnamese singers and trained them for that opera.

The part of Tatiana was played by Ngoc Dau under his guidance. Her acting was splendid.

Almost all the artistes who performed in the opera have been working with the Vietnam Ballet and Opera Theatre. They have attended courses in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries where they studied classical ballet and opera in renowned conservatories. Their talents have matured.

Under the direction of Nguyen Van Khanh, who was Badrigia's assistant at the time and later studied under another Soviet expert, V.V. Vasilov, the Vietnam Ballet and Opera Theatre has built for itself a body of competent directors, actors, and actresses and a rich repertoire. After Onegin, they have staged *Nui Rung Len Tieng* (The Call of the Mountains and Forests, a Korean opera), *Cô Sao* (Sister Sao) by Dô Nhuân, *Ruoi Trau* (The Gadfly) by Antonio Spadeveski, *Fidelio* by Beethoven, *Madame Butterfly* by Puccini... Besides, they have also staged famous ballets such as *Spartacus*, *Giselle*, *Swan Lake* with the wholehearted assistance of Soviet experts.

Looking back over the past 26 years, one realizes that the bright future predicted for Vietnamese Opera by Soviet expert I. Agida in an article published in the *Van Nghe* (Literature and Art) weekly after the premiere of E. Onegin, has become a reality.

The Vietnamese artistes have familiarized themselves with European opera and have built solid foundations for an Opera and Ballet Theatre whose repertoire includes world classics as well as plays composed on national themes.

NGUYEN NGOC HAI

A Scene in the Russian Opera Eugen Onegin by Tchaikovski staged by the Vietnam Opera and Ballet Theatre in June 1961.

Photo: THE HUNG

PEACE AND ...

(Continued from page 18)

the ruling of The Hague International Tribunal one year ago which ordered the US to stop its aggression against Nicaragua and compensate for the damage caused by the aggression.

Steps are now being taken for the implementation of the agreement. On 22 August last, 13 countries including five from Central America, four from the Contadora groups, and four from the Contadora-support group met in Caracas (Venezuela), in the presence of representatives of the UN Secretary General and of the Non-Aligned Movement, to set up an international commission for control and supervision. Nicaragua was the most active in carrying out the Guatemala Agreement. On August 2, it established a committee for national reconciliation, in charge of political amnesty, cease-fire, democratization and free elections in Nicaragua.

Public opinion in Central America and in the world at large consider the Guatemala Peace Agreement to be a document of historical significance and an important contribution of countries in the region to peace and social progress. The Governments of Vietnam, Laos, the Soviet Union, Cuba, the GDR and many other countries have issued statements hailing the Central America Peace Agreement.

Facing pressure from progressive public opinion in the US and feigning concern for peace in Central America, the Reagan Administration made a statement welcoming the signing of the Guatemala Agreement. But right after that it ambiguously said that the US would act upon these agreements only if they do not run counter to the interests of the US and its allies. Indeed, Reagan has been trying to sabotage the Guatemala Agreement by publicly maintaining US support for the Contras. The meeting between Reagan and Contra ringleaders in Washington on 28 August last, was a blatant challenge to the agreement.

Events happening in the region have shown the Central American peoples that their enemy, who opposes their aspirations, is none other than the US. For an effective implementation of the Guatemala Agreement, the Nicaraguan people should heighten their vigilance and be on guard against the danger of a direct aggression by the US imperialists. The peoples of Central America for their part should carry on their struggle to demand that the US respect the agreement. This struggle promises to be a hard one.

THE MAN WHO WENT IN SEARCH OF BEAUTY AND TRUTH

(Excerpt from a speech delivered by NGUYEN DINH THI, General Secretary of the Vietnam Writers' Association, at a memorial ceremony)

1910 — 1987

Nguyen Tuan was born in Hang Bac (Silversmiths') Street, in the midst of the former Thirty-Six Guilds of ancient Hanoi, on 10 July 1910.

In his childhood and youth, he accompanied his parents to many provinces in central Vietnam: Khanh Hoa, Phu Yen, Hoi An, Da Nang, Hue, Ha Tinh, and especially Thanh Hoa. In his works there are many reminiscences of these days, when the child was steeped in traditional culture with age-old customs and habits, behaviour and entertainment. This culture, however, was facing invasion by Western civilization, characterized by the cult of machines and commodities. As a child, Nguyen Tuan went to colonial elementary school, where some French was taught, then to secondary school in the town of Nam Dinh, from which he was dismissed in 1929 for his participation in a strike conducted by the students in protest against the colonial administration.

Thus he began his adult life, one that was full of twists and turns and was marked by major turning-points.

Like many thoughtful young men of his generation, Nguyen Tuan's primary wish was to get away, by any means, from the stifling colonial atmosphere pervading the country. This could only be done by contravening colonial law: he was arrested in Bangkok, Thailand, and put in gaol in Thanh Hoa. That was in 1930.

Released from prison, he took up writing and became a professional journalist and writer in 1937. The Popular Front had just assumed power in France and the Indochinese Democratic Front had been set up. Workers and peasants engaged in a seething struggle under the leadership of the Indochinese Communist Party.

His writings in this period reflected the bitter condition of writers in a feudal and colonial country. He also wrote penetrating critical essays on painting, which attracted wide attention. He signed his short stories, essays and poems of that period with many pen-names: Ngot, Loi Quat, Thanh Ha, Nhat Lang, Tuan, Nguyen Tuan, An Ngu Tuyen, Tuan Thua Sac. He liked acting in spoken drama, which was then a novelty on the stage. He played the main role in many plays performed in Hanoi. And he was among the first cinema actors in our country when he went to Hongkong in 1938 with Vietnamese film-makers to shoot *Canh dong ma* (The Haunted Fields).

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the iron gate of the prison that Vietnam was, which had been ajar for a few years, again slammed shut. Patriots were hunted down, thrown into gaol, killed; journals and books were strictly censored. Literary streams which had emerged had to go underground or face extinction. France went down in defeat. Indochina was invaded by Japanese troops. In those circumstances, in 1940 Nguyen Tuan's collection of short stories *Vang bong mot thoi* (Echoes and Shadows of Times Past) was published by Tan Dan. In the dark skies of contemporary literature, a star twinkled.

A short time later, in 1941, Nguyen Tuan was arrested, put on the list of people with a "bad record", and sent to a concentration camp in Vu Ban, Nho Quan, in present-day Ha Nam Ninh province.

In the years following his release from the camp, Nguyen Tuan wrote *Thieu que huong* (Without a Home Country), two volumes of *Tuy But* (Essays), *Chiec lu dong mat cua* (The Incense-burner the Colour of Crab's Eyes) *Toc chi Hoai* (Sister Hoai's Hair). It was then that critics spoke of his aestheticism, wanderlust, amateurishness, free-wheeling, irresponsibility, and extreme individualism. Not long before the August Revolution (1945) he published his collection of short stories *Nguyen* (Nguyen is his family name) with this epigraph *Kinh tang toi* (To Myself).

Our people's life grew ever more destitute as the war went on. Amid a terrible famine which took two million lives in the Red River delta, in March 1945 the Japanese occupation troops launched a coup *de force* which toppled the French colonial administration. By then the Viet Minh (League for the Independence of Vietnam) had been very active. After seeing his people on the brink of destruction, Nguyen Tuan witnessed their seething revival with the August Revolution. For him, too, it was a revival. That year, he published a short story which was also something of an account and which he entitled, first *Vo de* (No Title) and then *Lot xac* (Sloughing off). In it he recounted how he had been on the verge of committing suicide and then had come to view things in a new light; how he had decided to cast off his old skin and live a new, revolutionary life.

The nationwide war of resistance against French colonial aggression broke out. Nguyen Tuan, who was then in central Vietnam, joined a cultural group staging patriotic plays in Vinh and Thanh Hoa. In 1947, he headed the *Tien Tuyen* (Forefront) theatrical company of the Fourth Zone. The following year, he went to the Viet Bac war zone. At the National Art and Literature Conference in 1948 he was elected Secretary of the Vietnam Literature and Art Association. That same year he joined an army unit operating in the Third Zone. In 1949 he again went to Viet Bac and subsequently accompanied the Capital Regiment and the 308th Division in their operations along the Thao river in the summer and Highway 4 in the winter. During those campaigns he shared the hard life of the soldiers, living on rice balls and sleeping in jungle bivouacs. He witnessed the noble sacrifices of those young men for the survival of the homeland.

In 1950, he was admitted to membership of the Party and joined a cell of the Vietnam Literature and Art Association. In 1952 he worked in an enemy-occupied area in Bac Ninh. In 1953, he participated in two campaigns for the reduction of land rent, the biggest revolutionary drive so far for the distribution of land to the peasants. Tirelessly he took notes and produced essays which, although written in his inimitable style of former days, was filled with new feelings brought about by changes in the country's life and the beauty and majesty of its landscapes.

The days Nguyen Tuan spent in Viet Bac were marked by his essays *Duong tui* (The Joyous Road) and *Tinh chien dich* (Campaign Feelings). Those were the hardest years of the anti-French resistance, and the generation that lived through them experienced unprecedented enlightenment.

The nine-year war ended in victory, but it was soon followed by an even longer resistance, which was to last twenty years. Following the Geneva accords, the country was partitioned. Nguyen Tuan, who felt it acutely, immediately went to the 17th parallel, the temperary demarcation line between North and South Vietnam to see with his own eyes the cutting of his motherland in half.

Since then, his travels took him mostly to two regions: Vinh Linh, where the demarcation line was, and the Northwest highlands. Almost every year, he made a stay in Vinh Linh, for a few days or a few months. Suffering from the division of the country, he wanted to be where he would directly face the enemy across the Hien Luong river. His essays on Vinh Linh were later collected into *Song Tuyen* (The River That Was The Frontline). He also travelled to the Northwest almost every year. Starting with a trip to Dien Bien Phu and Tuan Giao in 1958, he was to return frequently to the region and visited every corner of Lai Chau, Hoang Lien Son and Ha Giang provinces. For months, he would live on maize, among roadbuilders, geological-survey teams, and border-guards in the remotest corners of the highlands, where, as he noted in his essays, his thoughts went to Ca Mau at the southernmost tip of the country. He made many

Illustration by: KIM LAN

boat trips on the Da river, and travelled along its banks. *Song Da*, his collection of essays born of those journeys, was a magnificent gem.

Song Tuyen and *Song Da*, written during a particular period of our history, reflect what was then uppermost on his mind.

Then came the years of the American bombings of the North. The essays Nguyen Tuan wrote were sharp arrows shot at the American air pirates. In late 1972, for twelve consecutive days, B.52 strategic bombers attacked our capital city. Nguyen Tuan refused to be evacuated. He fought with his pen: one issue of the *Nhan Dan* printed a story of his, about a wedding conducted near an anti-aircraft gun emplacement. This was included in his collection

Illustration by: THANH TINH

Hanoi fought well against the American aggressors.

When the anti-American war of resistance ended in victory in 1975, the writer was 65, but as tireless as ever. The country having been reunified, he could now visit the South. His pen was sensitive to the great changes happening in the country. He wrote *Song Da do* (The Red Da River) and *Thang Long cau moi 15 nhip* (The New 15-span Thang Long Bridge).

In the 1960's and 1970's, besides his favourite genre, the essay, he wrote notes and comments on his favourite books and authors, Vietnamese and foreign: *Tat den* (The Light Is Out) by Ngo Tat To, the famous 19th-century satirist Tu Xuong, Chekhov, Andersen, Tolstoi, Dostoievski.

Only recently, he had planned to write an article on the realism of *Lieu Trai*, a classical work of the 18th century, for the review *Tac pham van hoc* (Literary Works). But before he could set his pen to it, he departed from this world. His death happened so quickly that it was as through he had simply waved his hand to bid farewell before starting on one of his frequent journeys.

In fifty years of tireless work, Nguyen Tuan was one of the several great writers who blazed the trail and built the foundation for 20th-century Vietnamese prose. Together with such contemporaries as Ngo Tat To, Nguyen Cong Hoan, Nguyen Hong, Nam Cao, he laid a stone of his own in the newly-built groundwork of modern Vietnamese prose. His stone is a cornerstone which will endure.

Nguyen Tuan is a master of the Vietnamese language. He creates things that did not exist before, and for these creations, he draws upon his own efforts, the lessons he learns from life, from resources he finds within himself and in the cultures of other peoples as well as our own.

Many of his fellow-writers and the critics say with good reason that his writings have both the patina of the classics and the relevance of modern prose. In his youth, he was steeped in the traditional national culture, he was bathed in the writings of our scholars, in our folk art and folk literature. I think that among the classical poets he loved best were Nguyen Du, Cao Ba Quat and Tu Xuong.

Nguyen Tuan was a connoisseur of Western literature. His knowledge of French made it possible for him to come into contact with and assimilate the culture and arts of France and other European countries.

It should be noted that his interest was not confined to classical and modern French literature up to the 19th century but extended to the latest stages of 20th-century Western literature. Some people have spoken of the influence of Gide's individualism and nihilism on Nguyen Tuan. For my part I would say that it had passed very quickly. I believe that his search led him from French to Russian literature and that the two foreign writers who were close to him were Chekhov and Dostoievski. Chekhov with his penetrating perception of the daily absurdities which degrade human personality, and Dostoievski with his deep insight into the abyss of the human soul and into life at the bottom of human society, his sympathy with the destitute, and his wish to see man live a life of beauty, justice and humanity.

In Nguyen Tuan there was an artist who lived an intense life through his senses. He conquered the world by means of his extraordinarily sharp sense perception and he gave Vietnamese prose many pages full of vitality, of the masses, lines, colours, sounds and flavours of things and beings found in nature and in the lives of men. This trait gives his writings the modernity of our century and imparts a vigorous realism even to some of his apparently mythical stories. ●

INTERVIEW WITH A CAMERAMAN

Luu Xuan Thu is 55, but the only indication of his age is his greying hair. Talking to him, I was impressed by his youthfulness. Standing 1.75 metres (the Vietnamese average for men is 1.6 metres) with a heavy build and a deep tan, Thu was full of vitality. But what mostly emphasized his youthfulness was, perhaps, his ringing laughter.

There was soon a feeling of intimacy between us and I asked Thu what had brought him to film-making.

"At first it was only my love of techniques and machines," he replied candidly. "When I was young I was attracted by sound recording equipment. So I applied for a job with the film studio as a sound man. Our film studio was then only an unpretentious film-making unit set up in the jungle of the North during the war against the French colonialists. That was in 1953, and Vietnamese film-making was still in its infancy. I was given some book-keeping to do for a start."

Listening to him I could picture to myself the long journey Thu had made, a journey closely related to the development of the film-making industry in Vietnam.

In 1954, the Dien Bien Phu Campaign was brought to a victorious end. The French army withdrew from North Vietnam. The revolutionary army left its bases in the mountains to take over the plains and the towns. The Vietnam Film Studio moved from the resistance zone to Hanoi. Many young people in the Studio were sent abroad for training, but Thu was not among them. This hard-working, enthusiastic man was assigned to production planning and then to capital construction.

Thu got a break in 1959, at the age of 27. A group of young enthusiasts were making *Lua Trung Tuyen* (Fire on the Support Line)[1]. Thu, who was then secretary of the Youth cell, was made production manager. The director, Pham Van Khoa, was looking for a man to play the leading part — Dzung, a soldier. One day, he watched Thu play volleyball and decided to give him a try. Eventually, Thu got the part, and the film was shown at the 1960 Moscow Film Festival.

"I cannot say I am satisfied with the way I played that part," Thu said. "I rather over-acted it. That's because I'd never been engaged in combat."

There was also another reason: *Lua Trung Tuyen* was only the third feature film made so far. In any event, Thu was encouraged to go on acting but he preferred to become a cameraman.

Thu graduated from a motion-picture photographic course in Vietnam in 1963. His graduation exercise was camera work in *Tren Vi Tuyen 17*. (At the 17th Parallel)[2] which, got him a Silver Lotus in 1970. "The film was a test of courage", said Thu. It was shot at the 17th parallel which served as the provisional demarcation line between North and South Vietnam.

"Certain sequences were shot on the Hien Luong River[3]," Thu recalled. "We had to disguise ourselves as fishermen and work at midday, when Saigon guards on the other side of the river were taking a nap. The least suspect sign would draw fire from them."

Thanks to his successful work, Thu was exempted from probation. As a full-fledged cameraman, he took an active part in making a series of documentaries and feature films, including *Nguyen Van Troi*[4] — winner of a Golden Lotus in 1970, and *Duong Ve Que Me*[5] (The Road to Mother's Home Village) which also got a Golden Lotus in 1973. Of durable interest is what he recorded on the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the Truong Son Range during the war against US aggression. In 1967-68, Thu shot a battlefield film in Central Vietnam. The film is entitled *Mot Don Vi Phia Tay Thanh Hue* (An Army Unit West of Hue). Thu was also author of the screenplay. "The trip to the

The shooting of a sequence in the film "The Road to Mother's Native Village" (1970) by Luu Xuan Thu (right).

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• *DMMMX is the initials of* De mai mai mau xanh *"Green for ever" in Vietnamese.*

17th parallel enabled me to better understand the meaning of life and death, the heroism of ordinary people and the hardships they victoriously faced," said Thu. "We went to the front but could do little work because of the violent fighting. B-52 strategic-bombers were operating round the clock. There were nights when we could travel only five kilometres by jeep. But the experience was to be of great help when I made *Duong Ve Que Me*. That film expressed all my love for the Truong Son Range.

Thu shot that film with remarkable realism avoiding formalism and showing off and keeping away from beaten tracks.

Thu sat on the jury for short films at the Moscow Film Festival in 1969. Back in Vietnam, he taught camera work at the cinema school and was later in charge of the scenario-writing department, but he and his camera remained inseparable. In 1975, Thu accompanied liberation troops in a historic event: the liberation of the southern half of the country after two decades of partition. Thu was in Saigon on the very first days. His documentary "Saigon — May 1975" was a big success in news reporting. It was short but compact, powerful and convincing. Thu said Saigon President Duong Van Minh was visibly surprised when a big man in uniform, with a pistol on the hip, raised a camera and calmly recorded the scene of his unconditional surrender at the Presidential Palace that day.

Luu Xuan Thu has made more than a dozen films and has won many awards at home and abroad. In 1983, he was awarded the title of "Outstanding Artist." In 1982, he was made deputy director of the Documentary-Science Film Studio. In 1985 he became its director.

DUC THAO

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1. Lua Trung Tuyen — *screenplay: Van Dan; direction: Pham Van Khoa and Le Minh Hien; cameraman: Hong Sen. It won a Bong Sen Bac (Silver Lotus) award in Vietnam and a certificate of merit from the Soviet Cinema Society.*

2. Tren Vi Tuyen 17 — *Screenplay: Hoang Tich Chi; direction: Ly Thai Bao and Nhat Hien.*

3. Hien Luong: *the river that served as the demarcation line between North and South Vietnam from 1954 to 1975.*

4. Nguyen Van Troi — *Screenplay: a group of authors; direction: Bui Dinh Hac; 1966.*

5. Duong Ve Que Me — *Screenplay: Banh Chau and Bui Dinh Hac; direction: Bui Dinh Hac; 1970.*

The Mountain of the Five Elements.
Photo: DIEP THUA HONG

DA NANG: THE TOWN BY A WARM SEA

It takes only one hour and a half to fly from Hanoi to Da Nang, which lies about halfway between the northern and southern ends of Vietnam. Mean temperature in the area is 25 degrees C.

From the plane you can see the town of Da Nang on the bank of the Han river dominated by a high peak on the Son Tra peninsula and almost surrounded by the blue sea and many lovely beaches: Thanh Binh, My Khe, Non Nuoc, Tien Sa... The sea is a limpid blue and is bathed in sunshine all the year round. Many foreign tourists come to Da Nang for their winter holidays.

Da Nang is also a major seaport and a bustling trade centre of Vietnam. The area is dotted with ancient towers of the Cham ethnic minority.

About eight kilometres from the city centre is Ngu Hanh Son — the Range of the Five Elements. It comprises five lime stone peaks named after the five elements of ancient cosmogony: metal, wood, water, fire and earth. The place is reputed for its caves and mountainside pagodas. Because of its proximity to the sea, Ngu Hanh Son has also been named Non Nuoc (Mountain and Water). The biggest and also loveliest peak is Thuy Son (Water Mountain). To reach Tam Thai and Linh Ung pagodas and the neighbouring caves, you climb more than 100 stone steps. The most visited grotto is Huyen Khong which is spacious and cool and with many stalagmites and stalactites glittering in the soft light filtering through apertures high above. A narrow rocky path leads to Vong Giang Dai (Mirador Overlooking the River) from which you can have a magnificent view of the Cam Le river winding its course through the green rice fields of Hoa Vang commune.

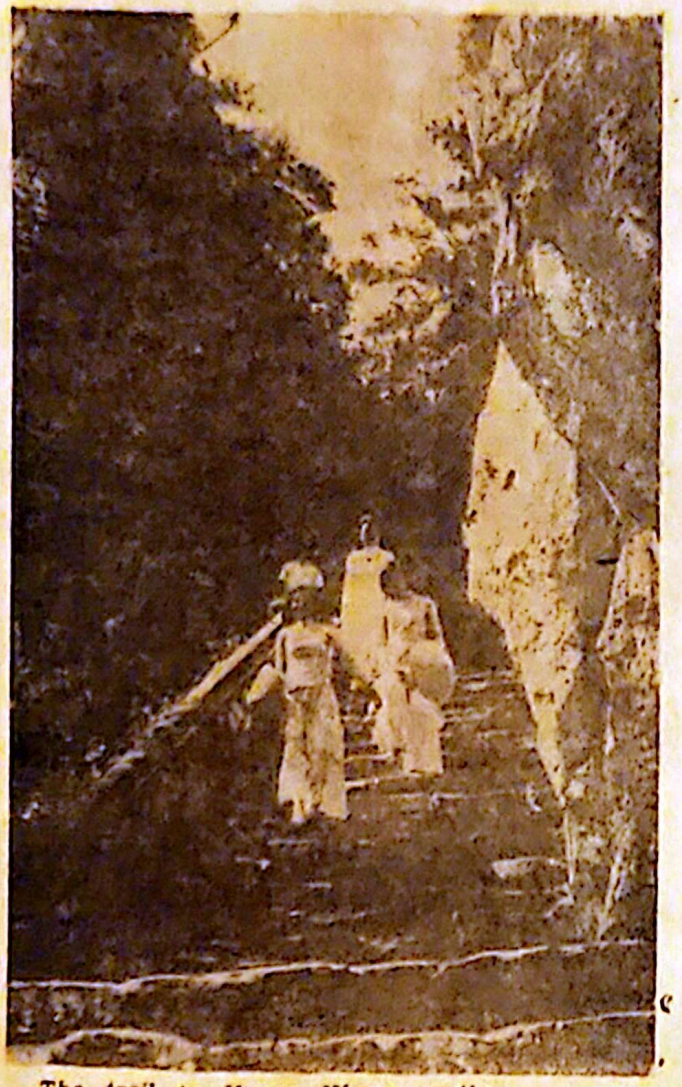
From this peak another path lined with tall trees leads down to Vong Hai Dai (Balcony Overlooking the Sea).

Before you is the Non Nuoc beach. Far off shore are tiny islands. A few minutes walk and you can take a dip in the warm water of the sea. The Non Nuoc hotel nestling amid a grove of pines offers all comforts.

Thirty-two kilometres from Da Nang is Hoi An, one of the most ancient towns in Southeast Asia. Several centuries ago Hoi An was a bustling commercial port which foreign traders called Faifoo.

Some ancient streets have remained almost intact with rows of moss — grown houses. A stroll along these narrow alleys will take your imagination back many centuries. Some scholars rightly call Hoi An a museum town

From Hoi An one can take a boat and visit magnificent rocky islets, where large colonies of sea-



The trail to Huyen Khong grotto.
Photo: DU LICH

swallows build their nests on high cliffs. These nests are renowned delicacies highly valued on foreign markets.

In Da Nang is a very interesting museum about Cham culture. The building itself is reminiscent of an ancient Cham tower. Among the exhibits are 280 original Cham statues in sandstone, an eloquent reminder of this once flourishing civilisation.

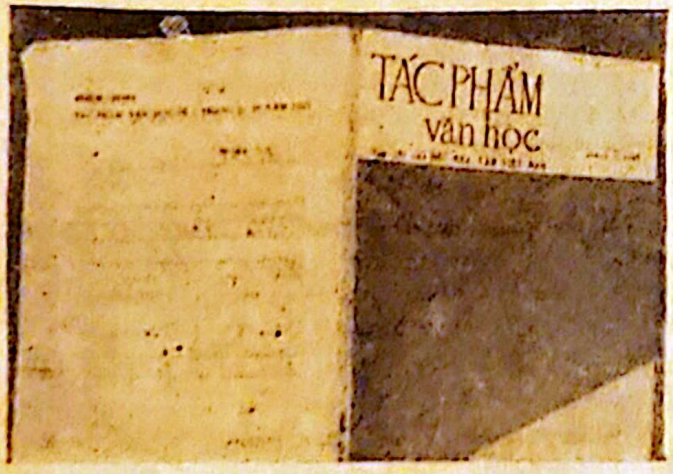
From Da Nang one may go to the Hai Van (Cloud) Pass. From the plane you can have a splendid view of the mountain jutting into the blue sea and the north-south motor road winding up and down its sides. But to cross the pass in a car is an even more exciting experience. You travel along a circuitous road for 20 kilometres, at times 496 metres above sea level.

At the northern foot of the pass is Lang Co, a small fishing village reputed for its oysters. Broil some over a fire of mangrove charcoal and eat them with a touch of pepper and salt. You'll appreciate their special flavour. Lang Co villagers are reputed for their hospitality.

Before leaving don't miss the souvenir shops at the foot of Ngu Hanh Son. From pieces of beautifully-veined marble taken from this mountain, local artisans make remarkable objects of art which will surely be liked by your friends back home.

NGUYEN THI LAM

For a trip to Da Nang
Please contact:
Vietnam Tourism
54 Nguyen Du Street, Hanoi
Tel: 55963 — 54674
Telex: 4269 Tourism VT
or the Vietnamese mission in your country



Just out:
New Literary Publication

The Vietnam Writers' Association has begun publication of a bi-monthly review called *Tac pham Van hoc* (Literary Works), with Nguyen Dinh Thi, General Secretary of the Association, as the editor-in-chief.

The review publishes prose and poetry, plays, critical essays, documents and other information on culture and arts, exchanges of views on various problems, and so on. This will contribute to a more complete picture of Vietnamese literature at present.

The review also introduces the Vietnamese reader to foreign literary trends and works, especially in the socialist countries and those struggling for self-liberation and a new life.

The first issue came out in July last. ●

UNFPA AND HANOI'S PO2 PROGRAMME

Gerardo Gonzales, UNFPA representative in Hanoi, speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the obstetric and pediatric station in Tan Linh commune, Ba Vi district, on the outskirts of Hanoi.

Photo: NHAT CAO

The United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) is a humanitarian organization set up to give assistance mainly to under-developed countries in the gathering of demographic data, in family planning, education, information in studying relations between population problems and socio-economic problems and in the drafting of demographic policies.

Hanoi's PO2 programme is one of the nine UNFPA programmes (numbered PO1 to PO9) in Vietnam being implemented under the guidance of the Department for International Relations of the SRV Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs.

The purpose of this programme is labour distribution and family planning. PO2 receives and distributes relief; manages, supervizes and organizes propaganda on family planning; gathers data and makes regular reports to higher level and cooperates with the other city departments such as Planning, Finance, and Public Health. The New Economic Zone Committee of Hanoi receives UNFPA aid.

Aid Projects

Under PO2, UNFPA supplies materials, equipment, medicines to dispensaries, clinics and gynaecologic and paediatric hospitals, while Vietnam sees to their construction. At present, PO2 has received the necessary materials for the equipment of nine dispensaries, three consulting rooms, and one gynaecologic and paediatric station in the city's suburbs and in its New Economic Zones.

Besides, the programme has supplied propaganda materials, contraceptive devices and gynaecologic materials as well as five tons of medicines such as ampicillin, phenopenicillin, vitamin B1, vitamin C, streptomycin...

The supply of medical instruments and medicines by UNFPA to Hanoi since the end of 1984, amounts roughly to 200,000 US dollars.

For 1988-1991, the Department for International Relations of the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs has asked UNFPA to supply enough equipment to furnish six consulting rooms and four dispensaries.

For the success of the PO2 programme UNFPA has also given Hanoi financial aid to run three courses for 200 trainees: (course 1 for heads of health stations, heads of dispensaries, birth control team heads, midwives; course 2 for co-op managers, heads of commune, heads of new economic zones; course 3 for vice-presidents of district committees, deputy-

secretaries of district Party committee). The lessons deal with demographic problems and family planning, contraceptive measures, census and population distribution.

Results of Hanoi's PO2 Programme

In 1987, the Year of Five Billion, our country has a population of 62.5 million and thus ranks twelfth among the 25 most populated countries in the world. The population of Hanoi, 2,503,860 in 1980, was 2,835,160 by 1986; its density is 1,102 per square kilometre (34,128 in the inner districts). It had 70,000 newborn babies in 1980 and 58,498 in 1986, not including a yearly addition of 30,000, while the yearly number of deaths is 15,000.

This fast demographic growth requires the application of two fundamental measures: restricting the population increase while sending people to New Economic Zones within and without the city.

The New Economic Zones Committee of Hanoi recommends that between now and 1990, 40 to 50 thousand people of working age be sent to the Central Highlands and to other regions. Only in this way can the population growth rate be brought down from 2.06% in 1986 to 1.7% in 1990 as planned by the 10th Congress of the municipal Party Branch.

Of course, the success of birth control depends on close guidance by the municipal authorities, on the State's policy of encouragement, on the wholehearted cooperation of various departments and mass organizations such as demographic committee, health service, women's union. The aid granted by UNFPA is most important for it creates favourable conditions for the movement of birth control to progress. In regions receiving aid, people are very enthusiastic about this assistance which has helped solve many difficult problems in the organization of a health network serving 80,000 people and contributing to the checking of population growth.

In these regions, the number of patients coming for check-up and treatment has gone up, thus reducing the pressure on hospitals at higher level. The demographic growth rate has also gone down. At Da Ton commune where the birth rate was 2% in 1984 (before reception of aid), it went down to 1.25% in 1985 and 1.1% in 1986. It is the standard-bearer of the birth control movement in Hanoi. The number of people using contraceptive devices has also increased: 510 in 1984, 680 in 1985, 1,400 in 1986. At the Co Dong dispensary in Son Tay this number was 390 in 1984, 518 in 1985 and 1,209 in 1986.

Clearly UNFPA aid has contributed an important part to the fulfilment of the socio-economic targets of Hanoi. However, great difficulties still lie ahead: its New Economic Zones are multiplying while the equipment necessary for the stabilization of living conditions there is lacking. This urgent problem is to be solved.

THE DUY

The changes in Bo Set district, Kompong Speu province, west of Phnom Penh, have astonished many visitors to Kampuchea. Kompong Speu was the scene of some of the worst atrocities of the Pol Pot regime and since liberation in 1979 has suffered several crop failures.

However, as we arrived in Bo Set, we saw golden paddy fields carpeting most arable land. The bumper harvest, we were told, was mostly due to the planting of the high-yield short-term rice strain called IR7 supplied by Vietnam, besides the traditional local variety. In all the villages we visited our conversations with the locals centered on double cropping, expansion of side-line occupations, and the building of small irrigation works.

• • •

In a break during work in the fields farmers of Srei Pheap, a commune in the district, took shelter from the sun in a wooden house standing in the midst of the fields. Some readjusted their sqrongs others wiped out perspiration from their faces and others repaired their work tools. This is the headquarters of the communal administration and was built with contributions in materials and manpower from the farmers. Porip Chuon, a man of sixty or thereabout, recounted: "Before Pol Pot came in 1975, our commune had lived peaceful days. There were almost 7,000 inhabitants, a market and a school. Even though no irrigation work had been built as yet, thanks Buddha, there was enough food to go round. Then disaster struck. In 1975 almost the entire population of the commune was driven out and marched under armed guard to Battambang, Takeo and other places. A number of us fled to the mountains. We left behind all our possessions including the ripening paddy fields. After the Pol Pot regime was toppled, we returned to our village. It was virtually deserted. The Am Phnom pagoda had been profaned. Inside were stacked torture instruments like axes, cudgeons, sticks... Many dead bodies lay here and there, in bamboo groves, along the foot of the wall. The pagoda had been turned into a place of detention, torture and execution. Most of the bodies were men and women from other villages who had been forcibly taken here to plant cassava and water melons. Polpot men gunned them down before fleeing to Thailand."

Like hundreds fo other communes, Srei Pheap faced hard trials at liberation. There were lives to be saved and a new life to build. But how to farm the fields with only a few crippled men and women and not a buffalo or an ox? And where to find fertilizer, seeds and water for the rice plants? Above all, the famished villagers had to have shelter and food.

Without draught animals and enough manpower, there was no point in trying to set up such teams. The provincial authorities decided to solve problems in their own way: setting up "solidarity-for-production groups" to start with. They worked together and shared the crops equally. The whole commune had 30 "solidarity groups".

Small steps were also taken in other fields: to build makeshift shacks for temporary housing and start out with small irrigation ditches to bring water from the river into the fields. Depending on the terrain, the weather and the work force available, the commune would decide whether to practise single

Harvest time in Kompong Speu.

Photo : VU HUYEN

A COMMUNE NAMED FREEDOM

or double cropping, and where. Of the 350 hectares of ricefields, 60 were eventually planted with short-term varieties which gave two crops a year, the rest yielding only one crop pending the construction of an irrigation system.

Double cropping has been particularly successful since 1986. The 60 hectares on which two rice crops are planted each year yield 4.1 tons per hectare, twice and even treble the output of the traditional varieties in the locality.

Even after work exchange teams had been formed in most other parts of liberated Kampuchea, there were none as yet in Kompong Speu.

Small-scale irrigation has been another factor of success. Tens of thousands of kilometres of irrigation channels have been dug in the whole province. In Srei Pheap commune, 17 irrigation ditches have been repaired, one of them 700 metres long.

The encouraging successes reaped by Srei Pheap stimulated farmers throughout Bo Set district to practise intensive farming, and especially increased their confidence in the new rice variety, the IR7 supplied by Vietnam. The people are moved by their determination to achieve self-sufficiency in food in a traditionally poor and arid province. Meanwhile, Srei Pheap has not neglected its defence duty. In 1987, 24 of its young men have joined the People's Army and more than 100 others have gone to help build defence fortifications on the border with Thailand.

The young volunteers' families receive assistance from the "solidarity-for-production groups" which help them repair their houses and till the fields.

After the inauguration of the office of the commune administration, the villagers pooled money, materials and manpower for the construction of a meeting hall, a health station, a supply-and-marketing cooperative and a primary school. Each year since 1979 there have been an average of four weddings in Scus hamlet alone, and twenty babies have so far come into the world. A creche and a kindergarten have been set up.

Said San Chuon, a young agricultural technician who had just completed a three-month refresher course at the provincial town taught by Vietnamese experts: "I was born and grew up in this village. All my four children are going to school and my wife is a good farmer. We have built a small house for ourselves and we have enough to eat."

After the harvest, farmers on their way back from selling their surplus rice to the government would take some rest at the now restored Ampe Phnom pagoda. Some distance from the pagoda is a row of newly finished yellow-painted houses. That is the commune museum in which are displayed exhibits on both the revolutionary achievements of Srei Pheap and the genocidal crimes of the Polpotists.

Some time later, on the occasion of the major festivals of Kampuchea, I had occasion to revisit Kompong Speu province and Srei Pheap commune with a delegation of Cuu Long province in Vietnam, which has been twinned with Kompong Speu. Porip Chuon is now head of the Propaganda and Education Committee of Srei Pheap. He spoke enthusiastically of the latest achievements of his commune, not forgetting to emphasize that the villagers had been very pleased with the decision of the province to name the commune "Srei Pheap" which in Khmer means "Freedom". "Freedom now we have," he exulted. "We are free, free to take flight, like a bird. If you ever write about this commune, don't forget to mention the work of the Vietnamese agricultural experts and the contributions of our sister Vietnamese province of Cuu Long, and also the bumper harvests due to the IR7 rice variety sent by Vietnam".

VU HUYEN

CHRONOLOGY . CHRONOLOGY

(15 August — 14 September)
AUGUST

18. The State Council issues a decision ordering the release of a number of prisoners and a reduction of prison terms for others on the occasion of National Day (2 September). (See article on page 9)

19. *Hanoi:* Formal exchange of ratification instruments of the treaty on mutual legal assistance between Vietnam and Cuba.

— Vietnamese singer Quang Tho is awarded a second prize at the International Light Music Contest "Friendly Melodies — 87" held in Ulan Bator (Mongolia) from 5 to 19 August 1987.

19 — 23. An Indonesian trade delegation led by Djukardi Odang, Chairman of the Pantja Niaga Company, visits Vietnam.

20 — 28. *Hanoi:* Holding of the Third Plenum of the Sixth Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam. (See article on page 4)

21. The Office of the SRV National Assembly and State Council publishes the Draft Law on Land for public debate.

30. *Havana:* Vietnamese artist Nguyen Quang Minh is awarded a second prize at the Fourth International Circus Festival held in Cuba.

31 Aug. — 7 Sept. A delegation of the Yemen — Vietnam Friendship Association led by Dr Abdul Wasa Sallam, Minister of Justice and President of the Association, visits Vietnam.

SEPTEMBER

1. *Hanoi:* Holding in Ba Dinh Hall of a grand meeting to celebrate the 42nd anniversary of the August Revolution and National Day (2 September). Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Hung delivers an important speech. (See excerpts on page 10)

1 — 2. A delegation of the SRV State Council led by its Vice-President Nguyen Huu Tho attends the second summit conference of French-speaking countries held in Canada.

1 — 15. A delegation of high-level experts on the technology of non-ferrous metals led by L.A. Pramonov, Department Head in the Soviet State Planning Commission, pays a visit to Vietnam.

3 — 8. A CPV delegation led by Vu Oanh, Secretary of the Central Committee and Head of its Economic Commission, pays a visit to Bulgaria.

5. Nearly 15 million school-children throughout the country begin the 1987-1988 school-year. (See "Panorama" on page 1)

5 — 10. An SRV National Assembly delegation led by Le Quang Dao, member of the Party Central Committee, Chairman of the National Assembly, and Vice-President of the State Council, pays an official, friendship visit to the People's Republic of Mongolia.

6. Vietnam attends the Leipzig Autumn Fair. Its exhibits include consumer goods, canned foods, porcelain objects, coconut products. Instant cured cuttlefish processed by the AGREXPORT Company (Ho Chi Minh City) is awarded a gold medal.

6 — 10. At the invitation of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Di Nien visits Japan on his way to New York to attend the 42nd UN General Assembly.

7 — 10. Jean Pierre Hocke, representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, visits Vietnam.

8. *Hanoi:* The State Council holds a regular session to discuss a law-making programme for 1988. It adopts draft Regulations on the organization and activity of People's Councils and appoints a Vice-President for the People's Supreme Court, two Vice-Presidents for the Supreme People's Prosecution Office, and some judges for military courts.

— Cheddi Jagan, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party of Guiana, pays an official visit to Vietnam.

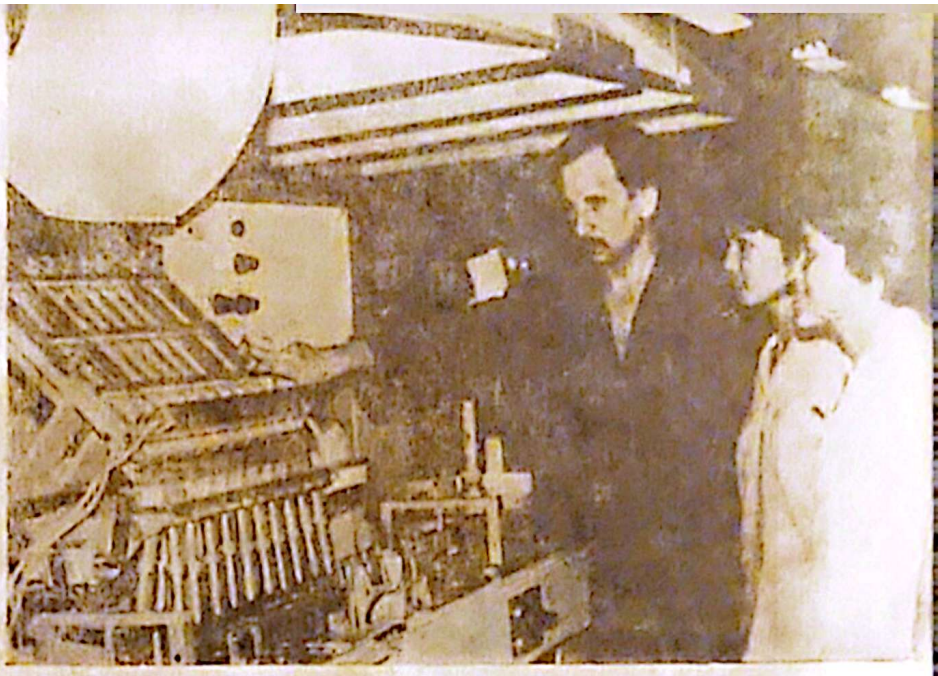
— XUNHASABA (Vietnam State Corporation for Export and Import of Books, Periodicals and other Cultural Commodities) attends the sixth international book fair held in Moscow, exhibiting 500 books from 51 publishing houses in the country.

9. Milcho Peychev, Vice-Chairman of the Presidium of the Bulgarian Fatherland Front's National Council, concludes his visit to Vietnam at the invitation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front.

9 — 11. A delegation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front headed by Huynh Tan Phat, President of its Presidium, attends the Second Congress of the Lao Front for National Construction.

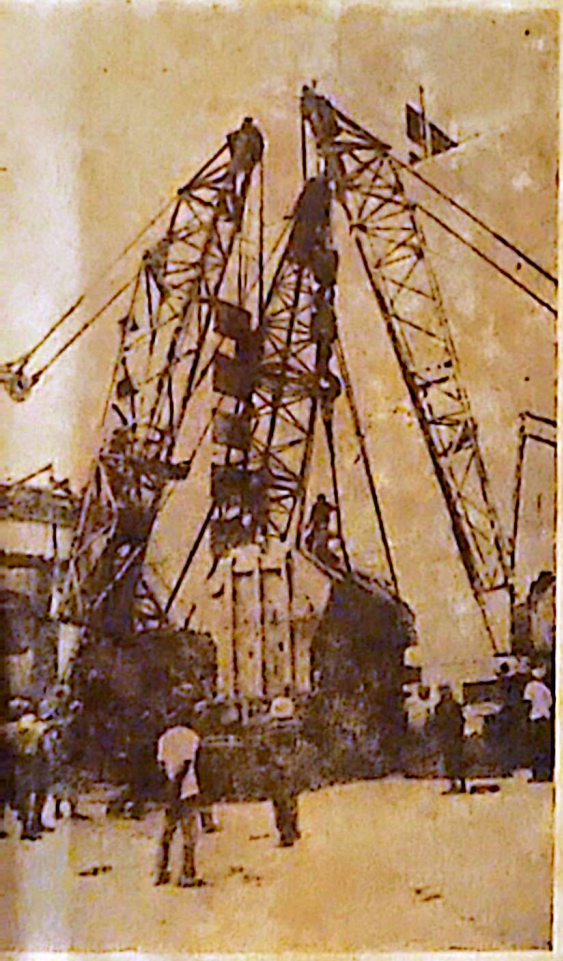
12 — 15. V.L. Artyomov, Secretary of the International Journalists' Organization (OIJ) and special envoy of this organization, visits Vietnam and holds working sessions with leaders of the Vietnam Journalists' Association.

VIETNAM–SOVIET FRIENDSHIP ACTIVITIES



● *Soviet expert, S.P. Nikolaievich, showing workers at the Second Central Pharmaceutical Enterprise how to operate a packing machine.*

Photo: THU HOAI



● *Moving a 125,000-KVA transformer weighing 150 tons at the Pha Lai thermopower station.*

Photo: TRAN SON

● *Inauguration of the Thang Long Bridge. A major Vietnam-Soviet Friendship project. (9 May 1985)*

Photo: ANH TON

Pictures by Tran Chinh, 50, a Vietnam News Agency photo-reporter of 27 years' standing.

1. Pouring molten iron (Second prize at a photo competition sponsored by the Vietnam Journalists' Association).

2. Sunset on the West Lake, Hanoi.

3. Summer day.

4. New block of flats under construction. (Silver Medal at the Art Photos exhibition, 1982)

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